CHANTING WHEELS

HUBBARD HUTCHINSON

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CHANTING WHEELS

A NOVEL

BY

HUBBARD HUTCHINSON

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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To

EVA AND HARRIE

WITH GRATITUDE AND DEEP LOVE
I DEDICATE THIS
THEIR FIRST GRANDCHILD

1928973

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CHAPTER I

THE FIRST DISSONANCE

RALEIGH swung up the narrow road from the trolley, and sniffed the smoky air with a zest of anticipation tempered by the cinders of reality. Then he laughed gaily. After all, it would be a lark. He passed some workmen, with a flash of white teeth and a flare of color so out of keeping with the sootstained sky and the drab tones of road and factory that two of them turned and stared after him.

He wondered what his uncle would say, the uncle whom he had not seen for three years, and whom he had only seen five times. The last was just before he had gone to France. He remembered, smiling to himself, the first time this uncle had come to the house—a tall, finely-built man, with black hair even then frosty and a square face with the angular jaws and mouth of a conqueror. To Raleigh's twelve-year-old curiosity, he was all that was beautiful in strength, and he had loved him on sight. As was

natural to him, he had gone straight to the piano and begun to play, confident that this new god would lean over him in amazed approbation as did his teachers. At that epoch in the road of music he had reached the place where "I Dreamt That I Dwelt In Marble Halls" held for him the passion of Tristan and the exaltation of Parsifal. He had just reached the place in the playing where the music soared to full-mouthed chords very hard to play but beautiful beyond dreams, when his uncle had spoken almost as though he were not present at all, and quite as if no playing were going on.

"Sis, you ought to get that boy out of doors; he shouldn't be moping at the piano like a girl."

The rainbow-hued crystals rising round him through his music had crashed suddenly to earth, and he had hated his uncle. For years the hatred endured; he hated him all the more, of course, because he had so much wanted to love him.

He remembered it now, as he swung along—remembered the puzzled look growing in his mother's gentle, practical face as she had replied.

"But David, he doesn't want to go out and play. He just lives at the piano. He's perfectly well, though, and strong as a little horse." Her face, so like his uncle's, had clouded with the strange look Raleigh was to know well as he grew older; the look of a mother who finds she has brought someone into the world that she cannot possibly understand.

Raleigh's eyes filled suddenly, and he reached

rather hastily for his handkerchief. His dear, puzzled mother—perhaps——

Then all thoughts were knocked from him.

He rounded the corner, his handkerchief for the instant in his eyes, and a warm, compact figure struck him violently in the chest. Raleigh gasped, cleared his vision, and looked down into the flushed face of a girl. For an instant both gazed. Though he subconsciously registered the brilliance of her cheeks and the blown curves of her hair, he actually saw only the trouble in the blue eyes, and the dilation of the pupils. His mood of reminiscence had perhaps sensitized him.

"You're in trouble" he said, catching two small bare hands red with the cold. "What is it—what can I do?"

For an instant the blue eyes looked at him, and something of the trouble left them. She caught a quick breath, and smiled a little, with an unexpected wreath of laughter lines traced for a moment round her mouth.

"My!" she gasped. "You surprised me so." At the voice Raleigh's interest doubled; it was the rare low-pitched velvet of the true contralto.

"I was hurrying so" the voice rushed on, "I didn't see you at all. Perhaps you can help him—or her," with a quick scrutiny of the tall figure. "Do you work here?"

"Not yet. What is it?"

"Come on." She turned, and hurried with long, swift strides along the frozen walk toward the shop

entrance, Raleigh at her side. He tried to catch the fragmentary story.

"He was workin' on the night shift, and he worked over time or something. He must have got kind of sleepy, I guess, 'cause they say he just crawled into the press-hole to fix a plate, an' the thing came down on him. Oh—" she shuddered, her lips going white—"he's awful."

Raleigh gripped her elbow, and they hurried along the icy pavement. The girl turned past the shop entrance down a street flanked by a bare wall of the factory.

"It's his sister" she said. "They sent word home what happened—they just live about a block away. He's outside on a stretcher. Poor little thing—she's about crazy. I was goin' for a doctor."

Raleigh's heart tightened as he heard. They approached an opening in the wall—double doors like those into a carriage house. From this came the screams of a woman. Even above the softened roar of the shops beyond Raleigh heard them, unvarying as a whistle blast, inhumanly regular. Under them he caught the groaning of a man. He seized the girl and sped. They flashed through the open gates.

A small group stood irregularly round a man laid on a stretcher. He was young, but his face was so gnarled with agony that it had lost almost the semblance of humanity. Over him had been hastily thrown a coat. Beneath it crept out a steady stream of dark blood. The coat was short; it did not hide

the dreadful feet, crushed out of their shoes like an orange out of its skin. One arm was bent under the man's head, the clenched fist blue and white under the grime. The other——

Raleigh turned quickly away from him to his companion, who had dropped beside a crouching figure at the man's head, a girl whose dead black eyes spotted her parchment face, and who screamed. Raleigh's companion had thrown an arm about her and was trying to soothe her.

He looked back at the man, and his head swirled for a moment. Several workmen stood about, horror on their stolid faces. A youth knelt beside a medicine case, and gazed into it helplessly. Raleigh touched him.

"What's been done?"

The youth—there was sweat on his forehead—licked his lips.

"We've just sent for the ambulance. I—I don't know much about it. Dr. Ledlie's not here today—My God!"—as the crushed man's groans rose higher.

Raleigh's voice flicked like a whip. *"What*—you've done nothing to ease him?"

The other shook his head. In an instant Raleigh's white, muscular hands were running through the medicine case. He found the hypodermic, selected a tiny phial from the row under their steel guards, and carefully broke the top and filled the needle. Then he turned to the writhing man.

"This will help, old fellow" came in the quiet, steadying voice. He slit the sleeve of the unhurt arm, fumbled for a moment for the vein, then slowly pressed the piston home.

Loss of blood hastened the reaction; the straining eyes relaxed, and turned gratefully to Raleigh for an uncertain moment. The groans sank to a whistling breath. Raleigh laid a hand for a moment on the man's wet forehead. The eyes closed.

The watching crowd had grown; men hastened to and fro on the back fringe of it; low whispers ran about. A man whose white collar pointed to office rather than factory, had appeared, and looked down at the man and then at the workmen with an anxious, slanted face. The shrieks of the sister came still, and the workmen shifted uneasily and looked at each other in dismay. The shrieks had all the monotony of madness in them.

Raleigh seized the girl's wrists in a firm grip, and looked into the vacant eyes.

"Stop it" he said gently, but with authority. He repeated it, shaking her a little. Presently he saw the staring eyes focus slowly to his. The screams suddenly stopped, and the girl toppled over against her companion with a little gurgle.

"Fainted" said Raleigh. "Get some water—lay her down." This to the boy of the medicine chest, who leaped away and vanished through the gloom of the disused shop into a door leading to the offices.

Raleigh smiled into the white face of the other girl. "She's all right" he told her. "Best thing she could have done, probably."

The boy returned almost at once, bearing a cup of water. Raleigh's companion took it, and began bathing the unconscious girl's forehead and wrists. Through the tingling of his nerves, Raleigh watched her, conscious of pleasure in the sure movements of her well-shaped hands, the instinctive movements that a young animal might make. He watched the curves of her neck, under a curl of blue-burnished black hair, and the line of her forehead white against the girl's black dress as she bent soothingly above her. She reminded him insistently of something closer to nature than most civilized humanity. She was very real.

He glanced at the office man. "How long ago did this happen?" He asked, his voice dropped.

"About ten minutes. The ambulance ought to be here now." His worried face turned toward the workmen, who talked in low tones. As if to cap his words, the clang of a bell sounded above the whir of a motor outside, and the red-crossed car turned into the building. Out leaped two blue-clad men, professionally stolid. Behind them a slender alert man with a black case. He bent over the hurt man, laid back the coat, and lifted fingers wet with blood. He looked up quickly.

"No need of the hosp——"

Raleigh violently shook his head, and motioned to the sister, whose eyes had just opened again. The

doctor nodded. Raleigh came close and the workmen crowded around.

"Fifteen minutes—possibly an hour—not more," with terseness. "Ribs crushed—lungs punctured all over—bladder broken, I should say—" he grimaced. "How did such a thing happen?" His eyes were on Raleigh. He passed the glance to the office man, who turned to one of the workmen. The latter shook his head.

"Don't know" he said, with a furtive eye on the office man. "I seen him throw out the press, an' crawl into the pressin' surface to fix suthin'. Next I knowed, I hear him hollerin'. Seems like the throw must not a been clean off, an' jarred back, or else it was wore. I grabbed's quick's I could. But it had got him."

"Where's his cousin? He works here too. They's buddies" spoke up another.

"Dunno. Maybe on another shift."

As the two attendants lifted the stretcher, the sister raised her head, and sprang up dizzily, with a chocked torrent of foreign words. Quickly the other girl slipped an arm round her; the sister clutched her hand convulsively. They followed the stretcher into the ambulance, and Raleigh as a matter of course stepped in with them. As he took his seat, he heard the office man speak to the men of the shop.

"There's no need to spread this around, you know" he said meaningly, looking at them through narrowed lids. The men looked down, nodded, and went away.

In the semi-darkness of the ambulance Raleigh heard the sister's sobs. He turned to the doctor beside him.

"Is there nothing that can be done for him? If it is a question of money——"

The little doctor sighed. To him death had become so casual an acquaintance, that he always wondered at the importunity of people, their rebellion to the last ditch.

"It's not a question of anything but minutes," he answered gently. "The boy would be a helpless burden if he lived. This is better. He may die on the way home."

But he did not. The ambulance stopped before a row of brown frame houses, as dingy as old shoes. The man was carried into the house. Raleigh following, glanced round at the drab floor and walls, decked here and there with flamboyant grocery calendars and prints from Sunday supplements.

They carried the man into a small room, close and heavy-smelling, and laid him on the bed. The doctor drew up a chair and waited. The men went out. The girl, her breath coming in gasps, flung onto her knees beside him. Raleigh and his companion drew together. Somehow she found his hand.

For a moment there was no sound save the whistling breath of the unconscious man and the sobs of his sister. Suddenly she raised her head, looked at them imploringly, and spoke in the same strange tongue. They eyed each other helplessly. Then Raleigh addressed her in bad French and flowing

Italian, to be met with a shake of the head. He dug into the back of his mind for his scant German. This brought a rush of color to her face. In a broken dialect she spoke.

"Does he—does he die?"

Raleigh's head bent. "He does, Fräulein," he said gently. She seemed to know, for she nodded dully. Then——

"Soon?"

"Soon, Fräulein."

As if in answer the man on the bed stirred and opened his eyes. With a strange light in them he looked at Raleigh. Then they sought his sister's, and in gasps, he spoke. His undamaged hand trembled to her bent head, with an effort that sent the sweat pouring from his forehead. As Raleigh turned away, his eyes full, the man smiled, a tortured smile with somehow a glory of youth round it. As with passing sunshine the little room gleamed a moment. Then his hand clenched on the girl's head, grew heavy, dropped.

Raleigh drew his companion gently to the door, then turned back. She was looking with dry hard eyes at the face on the bed, suddenly relaxed into peace.

"Fräulein—is there anything—can I——"

She rose with the dignity of tragedy.

"No mein herr, you—I cannot thank—" she trembled. Raleigh pressed her hand and hurried out.

His companion was leaning against the door, cry-

ing gently. As a child might, she turned at his touch and buried her face against his coat as he put his arms round her. Presently she lifted a flushed face, wet with tears.

"Why—why do such awful things happen?" she whispered. "It makes me believe there isn't any God."

. . . . . .

Raleigh walked slowly down the road to the trolley. He could not face his uncle now—tomorrow would be time enough. He had no appointment. His mind swirled with raw sensation; pictures raced across his vision. They mixed; yet curiously remained separate, like threads of dark oil in a goblet of champagne. The pulp-crushed feet of the man—the mechanical regular shrieks of the girl—the twisted agony of the deathbed—these traced dark coils through the glow of the girl's presence. He remembered the strange drops and pauses of her rich voice, the instinctively sure movements of her hands and body, her mouth, with its wreathing laughter lines. These pictures sank before the feeling of the hurt man's corded, limply muscled arm, warm and nerveless as he shot the hypodermic—the officeman's narrowed lids as he addressed the workmen—the horror in the stolid faces of them . . . .

He stared back at the Hydraulic before he boarded the car to his hotel. Its squat immensity, the strange shapes of gigantic towers, huge iron

funnels, smoke-escapes like crooked metallic cox-combs, globular iron monsters vomiting smoke—all took on, as he looked, another significance, and coalesced, as the separate voices of an orchestra, into one tremendous impression. The many-throated roar of its voices blurred into one menacing tone, in which lurked words barely escaping coherent and awful utterance. The strangely shaped furnaces and nameless machines assumed a violent livingness, as if some monstrous passion, born out of machinery itself, had distorted them into malevolent attitudes and tortured shapes. They seemed crouched for strife. Raleigh could hear their speech; like a sound arising out of another consciousness, he *heard* their malignant threatening shapes cutting the sky. They seemed intent on watching with suspended anger the tiny figures toiling among their feet. They seemed waiting to be freed . . . Perhaps one of them, for a moment, had been . . . he thought of the crushed body . . .

The girl's cool deep voice drifted over his heated mind, and the illusion vanished. He thought of her eyes, black-fringed and deep, and of the warmth of her in his arms as she had cried into his coat.

He shook himself, and rubbed his hands across his face.

"Fool" he muttered to himself as he boarded the trolley, "I don't even know her name." The trolley bore him away.

. . . . . .

Eleanor Grayson walked hastily toward the house, her face deep with sympathy. It was the noon period, and with her came kind, hush-voiced men, who creaked awkwardly into the silent little room. Beside her was the girl of the morning. Eleanor was speaking.

"It was so kind of you—you must have made it much easier for her" she had been saying. Her voice had the light ease of her manner, of the way she wore her very tailored clothes and her small veiled hat. It was the ease of generations behind her.

"Oh, I didn't do anything much. It was this man I ran into. My, he's a peach" came the rich contralto—a bronzed voice, with deep green lights in it, decided Eleanor. They reached the house, behind the men, and the girl of the morning stopped.

"I guess you won't need me any more" she said. "I'll be getting back to my brother. I was coming over to meet him when I ran into all this." She looked at Eleanor with frank curiosity and admiration in her vivid, rather boyish face. They made a quaint contrast for any painter—the one polished and finished like a miniature, gleaming without hardness, the other untaught as an apple blossom on a branch—and as lovely. "You're Miss Grayson, aren't you?" she asked a little shyly, the smile breaking out. "I've heard of you lots. Everybody in the shop likes you." She became suddenly self-conscious, nodded and went away quickly.

In the house sat the sister, her arms flung across

her face, bowed on the bed. At the window stood a pale, slender youth, his narrow face consumed with the fire of a pair of great eyes. He was the cousin, the "buddy." To him the dead man had been brother, protector, hero-friend in this strange land of hurry and noise, of toil and great weariness.

As the men tiptoed into the front room, he turned to them, and they shrank before the fury in the white face. There was no grief. It was burned away. He spoke to them gently, listened silently when they told him the company was paying all funeral expenses, and when they went out, turned to the window again. His eyes were fixed on the smoke that hung in the sky in the direction of the shops, but what he saw was another picture.

He had been summoned from work as soon as he could be found. He had run out of the shop entrance, knowing the worst. As he had started to cross the street, a big motor had blocked his way. It slowed, pulled to the curb, and a man got out of it, a tall, well-built man, with prematurely white hair and a young, spare face. The man was laughing to someone inside the car, and flung a sentence over his shoulder.

"Just be a minute, Jim. I've got to sign some checks and dictate one letter." He strode away with power visible in every line of him, from columnar neck to long legs.

The boy had watched him. He had dimly realized that this was one of the gods who controlled his world—perhaps the chief of the gods. He was

smiling. He was rich—happy—and he was alive. The choking grief in his heart over his cousin, horribly killed, turned suddenly to rage, and far back in his brain, the sensitive, imagination-laden brain of a dreamer, something clicked, and began to whir with a softness almost unheard.

The man's smiling, assured face had swung before him as he had bent above the still body of his cousin, and had kissed the white forehead, drying his tears, turning him white and still. The soft whirring in his brain never stopped again.

CHAPTER II

FAMILY PORTRAITS

NEXT day David Harde leaned forward in his desk chair, and grasped the letter more firmly in his well-kept hands. His brows, lifting as they did under concentration, arched his square brown face into a belying expression of vacancy. Once he chuckled. Now and then he frowned, and once smiled with a certain grimness. The letter was written on faun-colored paper, and the writing, big and black, looked as if Chinese ideographs had been set in horizontal lines across the page. Its postmark was a week old, and there were tell-tale pencil streaks on the envelope, that betrayed to David that it had been carried about unposted.

The letter ran thus:

". . . so don't think that I am for a moment giving up my plan of being a composer, for I am not. I mean to succeed in it, for I love it better than anything in the world. But just at present, I am having difficulty in making publishers see the merit of my part of the field. The development of the archaic modes, and their harmonic adaptation and motivation

to the purposes of modern orchestral structure" (David frowned and scratched his head indignantly) "is quite new.

"Then, too, there is the question of money. As such it means nothing to me." (David chuckled.) "No artist can put gain before achievement and still follow with clear eyes the white flame of the hilltops."

"Talks like he was in the City Gas," muttered David, taking a new grip on the letter, and ruffling up the white hair according ill with his tanned skin and clear, brown eyes.

"Still, it is a humiliating fact that we cling to this plane, and the body must be fed.

"So, unless you tell me outright that it is impossible, I am coming out to work for you. I went once to a foundry with an artist pal of mine to get the light effects. It was magnificent—the great dipper of molten metal at the end of the swaying arm, gleamed like rubies in a sable hand."

Here David snatched a cigarette, and began to puff furiously.

"I should like that sort of thing, you know. I should like to be part of such flaming strength, to hear the sounding symphonies of the great chanting wheels.

"Of course, my main purpose will continue to be my songs, but I hope to profit by the exercise of the work. I shall arrive next week, Orpheus and you being willing.

"Your affectionate nephew,

"Dante Rossetti Raleigh."

David laid down the letter, and sank back in his chair, thumb and finger caressing a chin like a small box. He reflected on the possible repetition of history. Bob Raleigh—a faint smile lifted his thin, well-cut lips as the image of the boy's father swung before him—Bob with his handsome big frame and dark eyes with their inward dreams. What a mating of wings to feet, of a will-o'-the wisp to a hearthfire, when he had married Alicia, sweet and practical, with all David's own efficiency, and also his limitations; who had worshipped her husband and mended him, with blind awe and maternal pity, through all the failures. David remembered how he had nearly disrupted the little office in the old days, before the Hydraulic had spread roaring across adjacent blocks—remembered, with a deepening of the reminiscent smile, how he had once sent Bob forth for contracts to another town, and after three days' silence, had confronted him, the world well lost, writing a sonata with a French violinist, whom chance had shoved across his path at the hotel.

Poor Bob. Pneumonia's swift annihilation had brought David genuine relief with its real sorrow. But Alicia, as her boy, always puzzling, grew more and more the counterpart of his father, finally had given up the prospective struggle with another temperament, and quietly died, leaving the boy just enough to make four years in a Berkshire college possible to him.

Reports of those four years had come to David,

some from the boy himself, more from rumor, because he had speedily developed into the kind of person round whom college weaves a legend, embroidered by succeeding undergraduate generations. Freshmen were told, how, when the team lacked four yards of a decisive touchdown against Amherst, he had been caught by the quarterback, gazing into the western sunset, and quoting Shelley dreamily to a shocked opponent at right end. After three years of a cool, appalling unexpected game, he had renounced the gridiron because he wanted to write cantatas for the choir and comedies for the Glee Club. To this, despite anathemas from his fraternity, and malediction from his coach, he had stuck. He had received the only A ever granted by Baldy Hutton in Literature 8, and had failed to graduate because he refused to take a semester of compulsory mathematics.

He had been ridiculed, fervently admired, and not a little feared by his classmates, and had had, in fine, quite the time that any undergraduate has who dares to be an individual in an undergraduate community.

All this flitted through David's mind, and later things, tales from his regiment, of a French general who had sat beside Raleigh in a tumbledown chateau near Baccarat, while the American sergeant played queer things on a scorched grand piano, and his colonel, unfortunately entering and incautiously speaking, had been furiously *shushed* to abashed silence by his French superior.

Well——

He pressed his button and said to the smoothly efficient woman who had glided from an inner office——

"Call Culhane in from the hot-press shop, will you, Miss Thompson?"

Presently there came an increase in the subdued roar seeping through many walls to David's office, as the shop door beyond his own opened with a huge puff of sound. David never heard it, this shuttle-slash of shouting machinery, without a corresponding enlargement of force within himself. These were the voices of his own particular children. Less successful men said that David was hard as his steel, and relentless as his hydraulic presses. Those who knew him better realized in him the driving force of the creator, be he poet or manufacturer.

David's own ground-glass door swung to admit Culhane, bare of throat, head, and arm, who sauntered to the desk, wiping his hands on his trousers. It was David's policy to ignore formalism as much as possible, and his men loved him for it. Hence Culhane's ease.

"Morning, Pat," nodded David. "Got number 2 blower going yet?"

The foreman grinned, and thrust back a lock of dangling black hair. "Going fine now," he replied. "It's them foreigners, Mr. Harde. Conling told me he thought one or two of them was monkeying around it and pulled the pins, and that dropped it.

We fired Molowski. He was the worst—always shootin' off his mouth."

The problem in the shops had grown with the post-bellum growth of everything but efficiency and commonsense, into a threatening cloud, whose dark stormcenter was the foreign element. Endless small things were adding to a general atmosphere of discontent, and Molowski, a Russian with suspiciously too much mentality for his position, according to Culhane, had finally said too much, and been fired. David frowned.

"Well, tell us about it at the council Monday night. Now I've got something else on my mind. My nephew is coming out here to work. I'm going to put him out with you."

Culhane stared. "With me, sir? What does he want to do?"

"He" David consulted the letter. "He wants to 'hear the sounding symphonies of the great chanting wheels'!"

Culhane's eyebrows met in a tangle of black above eyes like blue, black-fringed saucers. *"What?"*

David chuckled. "That's what he says, anyhow. You see, it's like this. He's a good enough boy, but he's got all sorts of fool ideas—wants to write music and all that. No sense as far as I can tell. Went broke down in New York." David grinned reminiscently. "And he says he's comin' out here. So put him wherever there's room for him. He's husky and harmless, I guess, but don't know a shear-blade from a die-casing. Keep an

eye on him—but don't let it out he's my nephew. Call him hard if he needs it. Let me know." He began opening mail.

The young Irishman took the hint and left. He brushed a dextrous mechanic's hand, supple, spatulate of thumb, across his forehead, in perplexity. "Chanting wheels," he muttered to himself. It wakened for an instant some Celtic cell, responsive to imagery, in his blueprinted mind. "Chanting wheels!" Then he laughed, and promptly forgot it, nor did he think of it again till long after.

. . . . . .

An hour or so later, Miss Hunter, guardian of the Hydraulic private switchboard, laid down her novel, back up, upon the control buttons, and shifted her gum from the left bi-cuspid to the right rear molar, before turning wearily to the little wicket at her left, through which the world asked permission to enter the Hydraulic. Since the memory of the oldest janitor, Miss Hunter had been thus—a heavy-lidded sybil a-top her stool, murmuring from time to time "Hydraulic" into nasal distances, and charming with expert fingers the writhing serpents of the switch-cords.

She swung toward the wicket,—then stared, then patted her hair. The gum, through some secret lingual manipulation, became quiescent.

"What is it?" she asked with the graciousness only accorded one type of person in her catalog—a handsome man. Maizie Gay, recognizing the tone,

stopped on her way to the stock room to see the cause.

The face framed in the wicket broke into a smile, and the line of a Stetson hat gave place to a white forehead and crisp light hair as the hat came off.

"Is Mr. Harde in?" came in a deep, curiously husky voice, with something of the reedy tang of an oboe in it.

"Yes, sir——"

"Oh that's good. 'Fraid he might be out. Will you tell him I want to see him?"

Mercury, met at Olympus' edge by a daring mortal saying, "Say, call Jupiter down here a minute, will yuh? I've got a fine proposition for him," might have experienced Miss Hunter's emotions.

"Say," she snapped. "Who do you think you are, anyhow?"

The grin widened. "I can't discuss introspective personalities through a hole in the fence," said the voice, and before Miss Hunter could chew, the door beside the wicket had opened, and a very tall young man stepped inside.

One knew he had never been in a place like the Hydraulic before—Miss Hunter recognized it dimly. It was not only his clothes, though the young men of the Hydraulic didn't wear soft-collared white shirts, long fur coats, or jade-green mufflers, of flashing silk. No, it was not his clothes—it was a certain impetuosity, a curious detachment of manner, as of one who had never known the discipline of denial, or were at all conscious of conventional

limitations. Miss Hunter felt as if a mountain brook had tumbled into her corridor, and threatened to rise foaming about her.

"You shouldn't have come in without being told," she said, but without conviction. She was quite sure this person would respect no property rights. He stopped gazing about, head up, like a dog in a new place, and swung to her, still smiling.

"Well, I can't go out now, can I? Where's Mr. Harde? I know he's expecting me. He wrote me to come."

Miss Hunter spun to the board like a teetotum, seized a cord, and rang David's office violently. "I'll tell him you're here, sir," she said, prim-mouthed, but the boy was already headed towards David's door, marked "private," flinging over his shoulder "Thanks awfully, but don't bother." He opened the door and disappeared.

Miss Thompson, tabulating correspondence in her own little office behind this door, caught a glimpse of a tall figure, heard a husky "good morning," received green and gold and brown impressions in dizzying succession, and saw David's own door open and close upon an unannounced young man. She rose in as near panic as Miss Thompson can achieve, and opened the door herself, to discover the tall youth beaming upon David, and patting his shoulder. She returned to the mail, and wondered a little.

David surveyed his nephew as one would an amiable puppy, and motioned to a chair.

"Sit down, Dante," he said. "I just got your letter—what I could read of it. You don't look exactly poverty-stricken."

"Relics of college splendor, Uncle Dave," he laughed. Then eagerly, "When do I go to work?"

David sobered. "I'm going to put you out in the shops, Dante," he said. "That's what you wanted, as near as I could tell by your letter."

"In one of those magnificent big places, all wheels and red hot metal, and crashing sound?" interrupted his nephew eagerly.

David grinned, and lit a cigarette before replying. The similarity of attitude to the old Raleigh caught him, as the boy leaned forward. "Better jaw, though," he thought, shaking out his match.

"Well—I never heard the hot-press shop described like that," he answered. "But that's where you're going."

"Oh, that's fine. I was so afraid you'd tuck me into an office with stuffy clerks, and long rows of figures in books. I'd like to start tomorrow. When can I begin?"

David pressed the button on his desk. "I'll introduce you to Culhane. I was just talking to him about you. He's foreman of the hot-press room, and will take care of you."

"Culhane, Culhane—I wonder if he's a descendant of Cuchulain?"

"Who?" snorted David.

"Cuchulain—the great Celtic hero. You know Yeats' poem, 'And Cuchulain, white and broad of

brow, with his hair like a cloud of night, went over the land to victory.' Remember?"

"Can't say I do," retorted David dryly, as the shop door opened and the roar of the machines suddenly puffed to them. Raleigh's head lifted sharply at the sound. David noted it.

"That's your 'chanting wheels'," he grinned, wondering what this vivid young person would do with grease and dirt and fatigue, conscious of a queer pang smothered before recognized. The boy was listening.

"Curious mixture of rhythms and tone," he breathed, intently. "Seven—four on nine—eight, I should say. Mostly toned to E flat. Overtones too strong."

David, considering this perhaps a devotional rite, politely ignored it. Culhane came in again, his dark hair tousled, and his face streaked with grease. David presented the two men, and smiled at the contrast, between his tall nephew, chiselled to the fineness of a Mercury, glowing with color, and the foreman—shorter, thickly muscled, with his mechanic's square, fine forehead, his impudent nose, and his clean jaws. Raleigh burst into instant speech.

"Awfully glad to meet you," he said, ignoring the other's attempt not to meet his outstretched hand with his own dirty one. "You're my boss, aren't you? I hope I don't fall down a drain, or you have to chuck me for getting wound up in a cog-wheel. What do I do? When do I start?"

Culhane blinked under the deluge. David waved them off. "He's in your hands now."

"I can put you on to number 1 shift," meditated the foreman,—"yes, on to press five, to take Molowski's place. Be around at seven in the morning, and I'll see you get fixed up with a badge and number." He surveyed the boy with a shake of the head and a smile, his eyes taking in the long fur coat, the white finesse of the shirt, and dwelling upon the jade-green silk muffler.

"It's mighty dirty work, and hot too," he volunteered. "Think you can stand it?"

Raleigh's smile slowed and altered, "Why not?" he asked quietly, but with a direct gaze and a tang of bronze in his voice that Culhane well knew.

Culhane hastily amended. "Oh—you'll get along all right, only"—he hesitated, and then went on with a stubborn honesty,—"you don't look like you'd fit with that gang of men in the hot press. They're a rough lot. Mostly foreigners."

Raleigh laughed. "I'm rather fond of foreigners," he said, picking up his hat. "Good-bye, Uncle Dave. You're a peach to take me in. Oh, by the way, do I have to join a union?"

It stopped both men. There was a little silence.

"Can if you like," said Pat shortly. "I suppose you'll want to," feeling uncertainly that anyone capable of that scarf would take as well to industrial ultras.

Raleigh spoke astonishingly. "I think they're a

silly tyranny. Fancy not being able to work when you want to, and for whom!"

The other two exchanged glances. "We aren't talking much about that sort of thing in the shops now," said David, unmistakably.

"Oh, I won't stir up anything. Art has no place for violence."

In the corridor, Pat turned to the shop. "See you in the morning," he said briefly.

"Delighted." Raleigh eyed him as a painter his subject. "Yes, you do look like Cuchulain—like Kay Neilson's picture of him."

"Who's he—some new knock-out?" said Culhane suspiciously.

"No. A great man—no one—a hero of Celtic mythology. It doesn't matter." He held out his hand. "I'm awfully glad to have met you," he said with engaging candor, "I think we'll get along beautifully. Am I to call you 'Mister'?"

Culhane's face split suddenly into a grin, baring his white, even teeth. This fur-coated young patrician calling him "Mister"!

"Pat," he said briefly. "Culhane, without the handle, in the shops."

"I just wanted to be sure" returned Raleigh, drawing on his gloves. "I once called my major 'Toodles' in a moment of forgetfulness, and was nearly court-martialled. By the way, do you know any place that I can live?"

Pat reflected a moment. "You might try the Y.M.C.A." He said thoughtfully. "It's about the

best bet, I'm thinkin'. Dan Mahoney lives there. Says they lay the religion on sorta thick sometimes without seemin' to at all, but he's out all the time. I 'spect you'd be too. Don't know as it would be swell enough for you," he finished, grinning.

Raleigh flushed a little, then laughed. "My dear man, anything with walls and a roof and a bathtub looks like a house of many mansions to me at this particular moment. I guess the Y is a good stunt. I have always avoided them, rather, but I guess it's the best thing. They'll have a piano there I can use, too. Thanks for telling me; I'll try it out." He held out his hand. "See you in the morning then."

But Culhane did not go. He rubbed his chin and grinned. "You're the first man I ever hired that didn't ask me one thing," he said smiling.

Raleigh's brow furrowed. "I'm sorry.—This is all very new to me. Have I been obtuse?"

"Been—well, I don't know. You never asked me what you was to get."

"Oh, shades of Orpheus, of course. How stupid of me. What's the noble stipend?"

Culhane laughed outright. "Well, the hot-press men gets about $8 to $10 a day now, counting bonuses—time and a half for overtime."

Raleigh's mouth opened. "Why"—he did mental calculation, slowly, "Why, that's about $300 a month."

"Sure. Ain't it enough?"

"Enough?" The boy rocked with delight. "Why, that's more than Cunningwhite gets for his musical

criticisms—and nearly three times what the president of the American Philosophical Society, who taught me in school, gets. I'm rich—I'm rolling in wealth!"

Culhane shouted. "Good-*night,*" he roared, and still chuckling, went off into the shops, with a sudden screech of metal cutting the air as he swung open the heavy shop door.

Raleigh listened intently; only for a moment came the flaring roar of sound. Then the shop door swung behind Pat, and the semi-stillness returned. But in that one instant had come the mingling of hundreds of voices, and Raleigh, in the screech of the unknown machines, caught an undercurrent of menace. He thought with swift nausea of the crushed body of yesterday. For obvious reasons he had not mentioned the accident to his uncle. He felt that if it was to be discussed, word should have come from him.

Now, listening for a brief moment to the battle cry of the machines, he experienced an instant of dread. "The place of chanting wheels" he murmured. Then he laughed, and swung down the corridor and out, with not so much as a glance at Miss Hunter, who had not taken up her novel in anticipation of his return, and had secretly bestowed the gum upon the under portion of the switchboard.

CHAPTER III

THE REALM OF VULCAN

DUTTON, who ruled in the little employment office, against whose door surged the changing tide of men demanding a job, possessed a gift of character-reading, sharpened by long years of exercise to a knife-edge of decision. He had formed a habit of looking over the waiting men, and calling in one or another, regardless of turn, if he read in their faces or attitudes anything of strength or originality. Rarely, he failed.

This morning, however, the assortment looked rather sorry. Half a dozen negroes lounged in a corner, in the hapless attire and tropically relaxed attitude that the African never wholly sheds. Near the door, several bewhiskered individuals stood smoking. Dull red sweaters and jackets bulked them, cloth caps lent haziness to their generally muggy outline. Sluggish eyes and facial angles perilously sharp, indexed their potentiality. An old man, his face drawn conelike into a dirty white beard, streaked with tobacco courses ancient as mountain waterways, stooped above a stove, and

fingered a slip of paper anxiously, mumble-gummed like a guinea-pig.

Dutton puckered his mouth and began running through the card index, showing where men were wanted, and for what. When he glanced out again, a tall lad, in khaki puttees and breeches and a lumberman's mackinaw, stood with his back toward him, looking on the falling snow and lifeless grey dawn of early winter. He was whistling.

Dutton saw one of the dark bewhiskered men suddenly come to life, the sluggishness stripped from his face like a mask. He turned, dark eyes glowing and laid an arm on the tall boy's sleeve.

The whistle stopped as the boy swung round. He saw the dark little man, an Armenian, he thought, ask something, saw the boy nod and smile, and his lips puckered to a whistle again. The little man's shoulders began to bob to its lilt.

Dutton picked up a paper on his disk, glanced out, down at the paper, then strode to the glass door and opened it.

"Raleigh," he called sharply.

He caught the foreigner's excited voice——

"Oh yes, yes—that it—my ole mudder's song. Where you hear——"

The boy stopped whistling. "It's in a book of Russian folk songs," he replied. "I am arranging it for violin and piano."

"Raleigh"—said Dutton again.

The boy flashed a smile over his shoulder. "Just

a minute," he called. Then, to the man, "Do you know more of them?"

"Oh, yes, many—much," he waved inarticulate hands.

Raleigh nodded as he came up to Dutton, who was gazing, speechless. Men did not say "just a minute" to whom he opened the glass door. The boy was speaking.

"I'm sorry to keep you," he said, "but that chap knows some rare music. I must talk to him later. Middle-Russian, and extremely difficult to find." Then, absorbing a little of the other's amazed stare, he laughed. "How did you know my name?" he asked.

Dutton beckoned him into the office. "Memo from Culhane," he replied. "Told me to look out for you. Come in."

Raleigh cast a lingering glance at the little Russian, then called—"Meet me here after work, will you? I want to talk to you." The other nodded, abashed into sudden silence by the presence of Power-To-Hire in Dutton. It is a curious abasement, taught in long hours of waiting before employment, and it tends to reduce confidence to nil. That the man about to be addressed holds your fate in his usually pencilled hand, produces the conscious humility of the judgment seat.

Dutton closed the door, produced a card from a rack, which Raleigh signed, fished in a drawer for a numbered badge, and scrawled a note across a bit of paper.

"Take this up to Culhane, in the hot-press room. He'll fix you up." Then still studying the other curiously, "What were you talking to that chap about?"

"Folk music," replied the newest member of the Hydraulic Company, pinning the badge upside down on his shirt. "The Russians have some very old modes, that are difficult to trace. This chant——"

A breathing moan, high above them, leaping in crescendos to a shriek, eclipsed further discourse. Raleigh jumped like a deer.

"Whistle," bellowed Dutton. "Go on up—Culhane—." He pointed to a corridor. Raleigh nodded, and with a sudden sense of compulsion, stepped through a heavily grilled door into a corridor full of streaming men. Raleigh joined the stream, turned left with them, and emerged upon a room set with huge machines. The crowd flowed diverse ways. Raleigh hesitated, then turned to a big chap striding by him.

"Pardon me, can you tell me where the hot-press room is?"

"Sure," said the other, with a quick appraising glance. "Goin' that way myself. Just comin' in?"

"Yes. What an enormous place it is," as he looked around at the rooms through which they were passing. They were stirring into activity. Men in overalls prowled round gigantic still machines. Down a corridor came a little electric tractor, with a man poised statue-like at the controls, and a little two-wheeled truck wagging like a mandarin in its wake.

In the comparative stillness the calls of men came clearly. But even as they walked, sounds (he fancied it so) began to shoot up like giant weeds in the stillness. The rumble of a starting machine surged heavily up an octave. Beside it rose suddenly the white purr of a dynamo, slim, whining, vibrant; behind them the cutting machines, fast and slow, began their meditative grating, broken by the crash of the cut steel and the slivering clang of the severed pieces. More dynamos, one after another, slid up a snarling scale of tones and steadied to pitch to be lost instantly among the big noises.

Then as Raleigh began to think his ear drums could stand not another whisper, began a low insistent throb, mounting by degrees to a deep-toned, pervasive roar. Instantly the sound-picture was complete. The other tones fitted themselves into the gigantic theme.

Raleigh stopped dead, and pointed interrogatively in the direction of the great fundamental rhythm.

"Lizzie and Jane and Pollie," shouted his companion. "Them's the three big presses in shop six. We go this way." He turned aside down a long narrow dim room, out across railroad tracks and to another building.

"Here's the hot-press," he said, turning to face him squarely, with frank curiosity. "Goin' to work here?"

"Yes. I am to see Culhane."

The other nodded. "Ever do any work before?" he asked, with the frankness characteristic of his

kind. Steel shaping is not conducive to delicate nuances of personal considerations. All the tact there is in the shops wouldn't make a fly-speck on a blue-print. The man was looking at Raleigh's hands—strong enough, with powerful fingers, and the broad palm of the artist, but white and unseamed. Raleigh laughed.

"You mean I look rather soft? No. I never did —not this kind. I guess I won't pass out, though. It can't be worse than 'squads east' in the mud. I staggered through a year or so of that."

"Uh—huh. Rotten, wani't 'el? Well, I got to go now. Culhane's in there," indicating a small shed, set like a doll house amid a towering structure of machines. "My name's McGill. I'm foreman over one unit of punches."

"Mine's Raleigh." They shook hands.

"If I can do anything for yuh, let me know." McGill strode off, his chiselled nose and chin and jaw marvelously at variance with his nondescript costume.

Raleigh looked after him gratefully, with a curious strong impression of having seen him before; it had amounted to conviction when he smiled. "What a peach," he said to himself, "and what a head to sculpture. How nice everybody is!" He had been feeling a little strange, and more than lonely, and the rough kindness warmed him. He felt he had made a friend.

The hot-press room, as Raleigh saw it that first morning, looked to him like imaginary pictures of

the temple of Baal in Babylon. The room's major length stretched to his right some four hundred feet, and to his left, another hundred. Squat furnaces, roaring and glowing, lined the wall—individual chapels in this temple of flame. A similar row of them clung to the opposite wall, fifty yards away. In front of each furnace, like pillars down the nave of the cathedral, stood the punch-presses, tall, cylindrical, their central piston surrounded by a colonnade of rods, and topped by an intricate arabesque of valve and lever.

As Raleigh looked down the stretch of the presses, he thought he had never seen anything so primitive, so pagan, so utterly remote from the world of intensely practical achievement that it really was. Smoke shrouded it with mystery—black smoke through which the vapor of the hot iron twisted unmixed threads of sharp green-white pattern. On the general gloom opened one furnace door after another, like the flickering of restless eyelids, and the black was shot for an instant by a bar of fierce rose light. From one punch or another came a flaring crash and a spouting of fountain flames through the colonnade of rods.

Men clustered about the punches or moved from furnace to press—ghostly, strange, their white bodies gleaming bronze when the light fell on them. But they seemed not men at all. The whole place worked itself,—there was nothing human about it. Above and around the shop hung the many-threaded veil of roaring sound, curtaining it from the world

men knew—about it wound the black and lustrous tapestry of the smoke, joining all its parts in a universal mystery.

The rose light from furnace or punch flared over it from time to time, casting for a moment gigantic shadows on the smoke-ceiling, sometimes catching a punch and its men like statues transfixed at the crest of action, and painting them for a stabbing second in a cameo of rose and black. Thus curtained by sound and knit by the smoke into an enormous indistinctiveness, void of human sound, it did indeed seem some monstrous complexity of another world, going on like the sun or a volcano with its huge impersonal work of creation, in which the pigmy human figures played but puppet parts.

Raleigh was roused by a touch on his arm. He started, to find Culhane beside him, grinning.

"Thought you'd never get done lookin'," he said, "she's some place, ain't she? Come on into my office, and I'll give you a locker key." They turned toward the absurd little structure McGill had indicated. Culhane swung a small panel and took a key from it.

"Number 99," he announced. "Take off your coat, and I'll show you where you're to work. Better duck your shirt too. It ain't no picnic where you're goin'."

Raleigh threaded the lockers, wrinkling his nose a little at the smell of mingled iron and humanity, and presently returned, feeling slightly cold, and enormously naked in his gym shirt.

Culhane looked at him approvingly. Raleigh's lines had been born to him, and nine months of physical laxity had not visibly marred them. "Well, you look all right," he said in pleased surprise. "In pretty good shape?"

"Fearfully soft," confessed Raleigh. "I've done nothing since the army. I'll really be glad for some exercise."

The foreman laughed. "Well, you won't complain of gettin' soft here," he said grimly. They walked down the center of the shop on a narrow gage track, and stepped aside to avoid the little tractor snorting by with a cradle of hot billets. The men looked curiously at the tall, bare-headed stranger beside Culhane, and made audible comment.

"Hey, get this comin' with Culhane. Ain't it cute and clean?" This from a thick-lipped powerful man, with little eyes, and a forehead in full retreat. Raleigh heard—glanced at him gravely with a lower and sweep of his lashes, but said nothing. Something tugged at him inside. "I shall have trouble there," he thought instantly.

"Looks like a movie guy. Oh you Wallace Reid!" This from a small quick-mouthed person, with a vast and Rabelaisian fund of humor.

Culhane was watching the new man with more care than he showed. They passed a swart trio of Italians, resting beside their press. One of them gestured largely toward Raleigh, with the thumb of dramatic contempt.

"Guarda! Guarda! La filiuola senza la mamma! Sant' Anna che peccato!"

Raleigh stopped, and, leaning toward him, spoke in liquid Italian, using the familiar second persons one does with servants.

"Speak not of my mother, dark child of a pig, or I shall change the shape of that ugly face of thine. And when thou speakest the tongue of Petrarch, do not as if thy mouth were stopped with dough." He started on.

"Accidente!" gasped the Italian, and put the lighted end of his cigarette into his mouth. The others stared—also Culhane, with a new light of respect in his eyes.

"You speak their lingo?"

"Yes, I spent a summer in Italy, and the language was rather easy for me. I hate to read translations, you know. They are so inaccurate. That chap is Sicilian, I fancy; he speaks very poorly, just as—" He was about to finish, "as many Americans," but he remembered Pat's honest "ain'ts" and switched to—"as so many provincials."

The Irishman was impressed. "What'd he say to you?" he inquired.

Raleigh laughed. "Oh, a free translation would be—'does your mother know you're out?' "

Culhane joined his laugh, then sobered. "Don't pay no attention to 'em," he counselled. "They always kid a new guy."

"Oh, they won't bother me," replied Raleigh gaily. "I'm hardened. I presume I shall always be

the center of the humor wherever it is happening—it was so at college. I had a very unpleasant time with a chap there because he didn't like my wearing purple pajamas and a green bathrobe. So I'm proof. It's only an arrested psychology of tolerance, anyhow."

"My Gawd!" murmured Pat, as the strange words billowed about him. "This bird beats me!"

They stopped before one of the presses, and Culhane called a spidery-armed man with a dirty handkerchief bound round his head, who approached, wrench in hand, from the press. "He's Roberts, head of this unit," explained Pat in an undertone to Raleigh. Briefly to Roberts—"This man'll take Molowski's place." He turned to the boy again. "He'll show you what to do." He nodded and walked back towards his office, pausing here and there to ask a question or give a direction.

Raleigh held out his hand to Roberts, who gazed at it in surprise and then took it in an unexpectedly fishy grasp. "My name's Raleigh, Mr. Roberts." he began. The other nodded, taken aback. Here was a queer sort of laborer.

"Goin'ta work on number five, are yuh?" he said in a tired voice, with a complaint unvoiced in it. "Well, she's the worst ole press in the shop. Know anything about punch steel?"

"My ignorance is only equalled by my eagerness," responded Raleigh, a little nervously, trying to be at ease, conscious of the group of men sizing him up

with short sentences and jerks of the head to each other.

Roberts stared, said "Oh" in a helpless fashion, and retreated from the unstable ground of personal amenities to the more sure footing of work. He explained.

"These here billets," indicating a pile of steel cylinders, "goes in them furnaces. We don't have nothing to do with that. When they're hot, we pulls 'em out, and puts 'em in the press. Watch—" as the furnace door swung open with a blinding glare of light. One of the men clawed at the interior with a long hooked poker, and drew forth a billet, rose-white, with crisp little lines of red corruscating about its edges. Another man seized it with long tongs, swung it to the press, and set it on end in a saucerlike depression in the center. Roberts stepped to the press, turned a gauge, and amid a hissing and gurgling of invisible water, the billet disappeared down as in an elevator, till only its white top reflected up the little hole into which it had disappeared. Then the punch descended like a long, accusing finger. Dripping with oil, it sank into the hot metal. There was a crackling hiss, a spouting of flames—the press shook. Then press and billet rose together, and another man, as the punch cleared, lifted the billet to a conveyor. At the same time, another was slipped on its place, and the operation was repeated.

Raleigh watched with hypnotized gaze. The sweat was beginning to trickle down his chest, and

had beaded his forehead. Roberts finished a run of billets and returned to him.

"See," he said, wiping his forehead. "You better begin takin' 'em off, I guess. Usually, they's a rest every oncet in a while, like now. But now and again, they run right along. We're short another man yet." He looked at Raleigh's hands. "You'd oughtta have gloves," he said indifferently.

A tall man with a nearly shaved head, and his thin body sharp beneath his dripping undershirt, produced a pair of sodden gloves from an overall hip-pocket, and thrust them at Raleigh.

"Extra pair," he said laconically. "Get 'em at the Hydraulic store. Quarter."

"Oh, thanks awfully," said Raleigh. He drew on the gloves. They were heavy with grease and dirt, and sticky with warmth, and the inside was both gritty and slippery to the touch.

"Ugh!" thought the boy. "I won't have any more piano touch than an ox." But he drew them on gratefully. Someone gave him a pair of tongs. Then the furnace door opened, and the billets began running. Raleigh seized the first, and in his eagerness, took hold too high up. It promptly fell on the floor like a small meteor, and instantly became the center of an oily, though miniature conflagration. Crimson, he picked it up, did likewise with another, and toppled the third too far toward him, only juggling it to the cradle with frantic wavings of elbows. After this, things went better, and he learned to swing the billet, which weighed about twenty-five

pounds, from the punch to the cradle in one sweep on the tongs.

He noticed another man join the group, but not till nearly half an hour later did he have a chance to look up. Then, hot, reeking, with his back and shoulders beginning to pulse with a warm ache, he leaned on his tongs, and looked around to find the little Russian gazing fixedly at him out of warm, brown eyes. He exclaimed.

"What luck! Are you going to work here?"

"Yes—I think."

Again came the billets. Raleigh found himself growing used to the continued din about him, if he did not to the heat and the weight of the billets. By the end of the morning, he found he could analyze the sounds enough to hear his neighbor's conversations without strain, and found the pitching of his voice that carried without shouting.

At eleven-thirty, came the hooting of the siren whistle again, driving all other sounds to silence. Instantly there was magic. Men dropped their tools, and scuttled down the shop toward the locker room. Raleigh walked slowly after them, too tired to care whither or why. Then he straightened. This would never do. He flung up his head, and marched quickly down the track.

Near Culhane's office, he met McGill. The other grinned.

"How you comin'?" he asked.

"Fine," replied Raleigh valiantly. ("Oh you fearful liar," chorused bicep and deltoid in silent, sting-

ing reproof.) "What means the stir in Rome?" indicating the men streaming across the shop.

"Lunch. Bring any?"

"No. I never thought of it."

"Most of us do out here, cause you have to dress to go up to the Hydraulic lunch room—put on a shirt, anyhow, an' you can't do that without washin', and it all takes time. We only get half an hour. I'm goin' up today, though. Come on."

Raleigh dived into his locker, and pulled on his shirt, hastily soused his face and hands at a row of taps and white basins, and hurried to McGill. The latter roared at sight of him. He had succeeded in smearing his face to a mottled brown, and a rain of soot had settled on his light hair.

Raleigh saw the expression, and smiled ruefully. "I suppose I am a fearful spectacle," he said. "I feel as if I had been fed on smoke bombs for days, and was breaking out with them."

They hurried across the shops and up-stairs to the lunch room, which was of the self-serving variety, and joined the line of waiting men. McGill drew forth a package of crumpled cigarettes, and lit one, shoving the pack once more into his pocket. Raleigh eyed it hungrily.

"I wonder if I could borrow a cigarette?" he asked, questioning the continuance of army policy in the shops.

"Hell, yes. Here." The two young men enveloped themselves comfortably in blue smoke, and leaned against the wall.

"'Bonny St. John still stands on Sterling,'" carolled McGill absently, in a voice of such unconsciously lovely quality that Raleigh flung away from him and stared.

"Great Hat!" he exclaimed. "Where did you hear that—and where did you get that voice?"

McGill blinked. "Huh?" he asked.

"That song—it's the Two Sisters O'Binnorae—an old Scotch ballad."

"Yeah. The ole woman sings it around the house."

Raleigh considered him. "Do you like music?" he asked gravely.

"I sure do," responded McGill enthusiastically. "Do you know that new tune, 'The Bolshevik Blues?'"

Raleigh shuddered inwardly—but bowed to custom. "No, I'm afraid not," he replied. Then, taking hope again, "Do you sing much? Your voice has a lovely quality—baritone, I should say."

McGill blushed violently, and glanced around. Their neighbors had not heard. He drew nearer Raleigh.

"Naw. I just make a racket all the time. Specially when I'm takin' a bath. Funny how you always want to sing in a bathtub. My kid brother calls me the human cally-ope."

The line moved forward, and when, with trays of food, they were seated at long tables, Raleigh looked about in interest. The room was full of men like himself as to dirt and clothing, all eating with

as much speed as possible. The noise was prodigious. Raleigh saw his little Russian, tray in hand, sit down at a near table, and begin to eat quietly, without troubling to remove his cap. A big tester, opposite McGill, and taking his soup with the orchestration of a Strauss, looked across at the covered man with disgust.

"Hell—" he rumbled, sucking in soup like a cave of winds, "hell—" (schloop, schloop) "*he* ain't got no manners." He licked his spoon, back up, with Chesterfieldian superiority.

Raleigh choked violently into his tray, then looked across to McGill, and resumed the conversation of his interest.

"Look here," he said, unconscious of the attention his clean-cut head and clear enunciation were drawing, "if you like singing, why can't we get up a quartet here, and get together?"

He felt a thud on his shoulder, as his right hand neighbor, a huge-paunched fellow with a walrus moustache and small, happy eyes peering like amiable marbles over his round cheeks, laid a gigantic hand on him.

"You said it, brother," he affirmed expansively. "I'm on. I been a-lookin' for sumthun' like that. You a new guy here?"

"Yes. I'm on press five, in the hot-press." The tabulation somehow pleased him. He belonged.

"I run the picklin' room. Are you a moosician?"

"Well, I'm very fond of it"—cautiously, "are you?"

"I sure am, ain't I, Freddy?" to McGill.

"You bet," responded Fred.

Raleigh beamed. "Splendid," he cried, with such enthusiasm that the two grimy stokers, down the table stopped chewing to look at him with suspicion. "Why don't you two, and two others, a lead and a tenor, come down to the Y. M. C. A. with me some night? I can get to a piano there, and we'll get going. How about tonight? I know of a lot of fine songs—I was leader of the Glee Club in college—" He had not meant this last to get out.

McGill caught it. "You go to college?" he asked quickly.

"Yes—now," Raleigh hurried on, "now we can—"

But his big neighbor, he of the pickling room, drowned him out.

"Well, I'll be damned—" he surveyed him with mild wonder, and a dawning new expression. "What the hell do you know about that? I thought they was sumpin' funny about you. What you doin' in the shops, if you're all eddicated and everything?" with the unspoken barrier which the unlettered quickly raise to the mentality of greater opportunity.

Raleigh felt the unconscious antagonism, and flushed. He liked these men—amazingly—as he had liked many in his regiment. Why could they not accept him for what he was? He saw in McGill's grave eyes the same question. McGill was different, he felt, and it hurt. He leaned forward and looked straight at him.

"I'm here," he said quietly, but with finality in his tone, "just for the same reason that you are, I presume—to make a living." McGill's eyes dropped, then lifted clearly, with an unspoken pardon in them. Raleigh felt he understood. Lightly, as they rose from the table, he said. "Well, how about it? Can you both come down, and dig up two others?"

The man of the pickling room nodded. "Sure. I'll get Sam Swenson and Bill Hogan. 'Bout half past seven?"

"Yes. I'll meet you in the lobby." They clattered down the iron stairs, greasy with countless feet, and Raleigh reached his press as the whistle rose on the air. He found the little Russian of the waiting room finishing the tail of a pickle.

"Hello there," he cried. "This is luck, isn't it?"

The other nodded, his dull face breaking into a slow smile.

"I show you those songs, Barin, after?"

Raleigh drew on his sodden gloves. "Yes, indeed," he said. "I'd love it." He picked a billet from the press and swung it to the cradle, talking over his shoulder. "All your folk music is so beautiful, and so full of color"—another billet—"and the rhythms are intricate and fascinating—" The little Russian was looking his wonderment when Roberts appeared, and curtly directed him to a furnace, though there was nothing there for him to do at that time. The boy noted his face fall sullen, clouded with a smothered resentment—

suddenly all animal. He wondered for some time about it. "Does he feel the same distaste for unreasoning authority that I would?" he questioned.

As the afternoon wore away, and his work, through habit, acquired less and less conscious direction, he began listening with attention to the network of noises about him, differentiating its parts, tabulating its rhythms with expert ear. At the base of all the complex web of sound lay, like a pattern, the pervasive throb of the three great presses. He found himself swinging his billets in time to it, and tunes, strong, simple, framed on the symmetry of its pulsing, began to form in his mind.

"It's the fundamental theme of the whole place" he thought. "Maybe I can use it for something."

CHAPTER IV

"PELLEAS AND MELISANDE"

THE final whistle lifted Raleigh out of an introspective revery, made possible by a months' toughening of arms and back to almost automatic functioning. He straightened, walked to the locker room, and changed to his street clothes.

These Raleigh had chosen deliberately with an eye to the picturesque. The army breeches, patterned with stains, bore still the lines of their Parisian tailor, and the khaki-and-blue mackinaw, with the sins of many campfires upon it, undeniably proclaimed itself as Abercrombies. So, despite dirt and stiff legs, he made a jaunty figure as he left the shop, a Canadian toque of blue debonairly on one side of his head. He looked round for McGill, but failed to see him, and marched off to the trolley. He looked back at the Hydraulic, its great chimneys barring the cold blue of the winter sky, and its furnaces adding a fierce note of rose light to the low clouds. He thought of his first month's work—thought of it in terms of fatigue and dirt, and of new, vivid experience—then thought of the thou-

sands of men to whom it meant dirt and fatigue—men who grew from childhood to youth and from youth to old age under its smoky skies. He drew a quick breath and, fighting his way through the crowd about the trolley, plunged on. Forty-five minutes before him, he pulled a miniature conductor's score out of his pocket, and, before the trolley started, happily lost himself in the misted beauty, the pale shadows, of *Pelleas and Melisande.*

He was conscious that someone sat down beside him but didn't look up until an incredulous, cool voice that instantly brought a picture of furs and tailored trim clothes, said:

"Why—that's Debussy!"

With his eyes still on the page, Raleigh raised a grimy forefinger.

"Wait" he answered, smiling. "Voices are my specialty. You're between 20 and 26, probably well dressed, with a conventional background that you've pretty well overcome: a graduate of some college east of Albany, and your head rules your heart. You don't know much about music, but like it. You *should* be pretty, but I suppose that's asking too much."

He heard a gasp, then swung round, grinning, to encounter the astounded gaze of two very brown eyes. That was all—for an instant—just brown—like autumn pools, leaf-lined and deep. Then the ensemble registered—a small straight, tiptilted nose, black brows that swept back and up with the lines of Mercury's cap, and lips parted in surprise.

As Raleigh looked, the chin lifted, and she laughed— a silverly infectious cascade—"like de Pachmann doing a Chopin waltz" as Raleigh put it later. Then she smiled, poised, composed.

"Well—*that* is one of the most amusing things I ever heard. Where did you learn?"

"It wasn't asking too much," murmured Raleigh his eyes on her face, "It wasn't asking enough."

"*I* asked—where did you learn character-reading by voice?" There was a firm pull to the impersonal that Raleigh instantly acceded to.

"Oh, listening to people talk at concerts. One has to stand five minutes of it in decency, before turning round and glaring. Don't you love this thing?" thumping the score affectionately.

She nodded, quick eyes surveying him. Raleigh felt the picturesqueness of the mackinaw was not lost, and deliberately wiped a smut across his nose with one black-grimed hand to add atmosphere.

"Yes." She evidently was bursting with questions. "I saw it last in Paris, in February 1919."

"No, really? I was there then, too, studying with Ravel."

"With"—this left her wordless a moment. Then "And—are studying now?" with a frankly complete glance that included costume, dirt, and score.

"Yes—an American symphony." He replied gravely, with twinkling eyes. "This month was just the prelude, but the themes were pretty fully stated."

She picked up the play easily. "Do you like the orchestration?"

"Not so much. Brass too loud—color too dark and lurid—demands too much of the players. Needs more rests, and the whistle motif used more frequently."

She laughed delightedly, then suddenly, her eyes narrowed at him with inward revelation. Then she looked demurely down.

"You must be in the hot-press shop." She enjoyed his quick look of surprise at the clean hit.

"Now see here," he protested, "you're spoiling it all. You're anchoring the careless feet of Romance in *locus operandi.* You've turned the diamond, like Tytl in 'The Blue Bird,' and I've got to go back into every-dayness." She was like wine to him. "I've nothing left but to introduce myself."

She reached over and pressed the button to stop the trolley. "Oh, that's quite unnecessary, Mr. Raleigh," she said imperturbably, her eyes on her lap.

Raleigh stared, then meekly bowed his head. "I never had a Conan Doyle mind" he said plaintively. "Please explain, Miss——?"

"Dear, dear—must you anchor the careless feet of romance (I suspect you of quoting that from a novel) in the banal specific of *modus operandi?*" She rose as the trolley began grating to a stop, and patted her veil with a grey gloved hand. "I've enjoyed the lecture on orchestration so much. Goodbye."

Raleigh half started up, encountered the elfin

triumphant sparkle of the brown eyes, and promptly sat down, blithely impersonal.

"Goodbye" he said pleasantly, touched his Canadian toque, and bent his eyes again to his reading. From under lowered lids he saw her face flush suddenly, saw her hesitate, then turn quickly. The bell clanged. The car went on.

"Score one," he thought, but without elation. Then he brightened. "If she's a good sport, she'll give me a cue somehow; if she isn't"—he dismissed this as impossible, and turning to the window scene of *Pelleas,* read it with ardor.

CHAPTER V

FUGUES AND FISTS

THE following Monday, the shop council, consisting of David, his vice-president, secretary and treasurer, the general manager, and the head foreman of all the shops, concluded a stormy session in David's office. Marshall, the vice-president, had suggested compromise, a certain accession to the demands of the unions, namely, that the Hydraulic should become a strictly union shop, employing none but union men.

To this, surprisingly enough to the lay mind, had risen bitter objection from most of the shop foremen themselves. Pat had delivered himself.

"You don't know what it'd mean, Mr. Marshall" he said bluntly. "I've worked in closed shops. I know. The men here are happy enough, an' it's just that the union fellows know that that makes 'em crazy to get in. I'll say my shop's the worst—them foreigners 'll swallow anything anybody tells 'em. All the trouble's comin' from outside agitators that want to pull a strike for a tight union shop. If the strike comes—"

"If it comes, let it" David's fist banged on the desk, and his jaw grew even more angular. "Pat's right. The Hydraulic has always been an open shop, and open she stays if we have to shut." The paradox escaped notice. "How's the idea of the Welfare Building going over, Parker?" this to a short man, of Van Dyke beard and benevolent gold spectacles and great enthusiasms.

"I'm not sure" he hesitated. "Some of them undoubtedly see what we're after, but apparently lots of them resent what they consider our attempts to amuse them. Not many, but some take it as a sop to Cerbers. Of course, I just got that 'through channels.' I don't know, frankly, how it is going to go. We must make a big thing of the opening night."

"What are you planning for entertainment?" asked Marshall.

"Why, that has rather solved itself. There is a chap in the hot-press shop named Raleigh—a most remarkable fellow." (David's eyes closed slightly as he regarded the map of the plant innocently.) "He came to me the other day and said that he had organized a quartet and wanted to know if he could give a concert for the men some night if he worked up a program. Of course, I was delighted, and kept an eye on him after that. I can't make him out, nor can anyone else. He is obviously well-educated. Dutton tells me that he has gained quite a following among the foreigners because he has gotten together now four quartets—Bohemians,

Russians, etc. He's been here only a month. Takes them in rotation down at the Y. M. C. A. where he lives and drills them. The men love it. He seems to know music."

"Jazz, I suppose, Parker?" said Marshall languidly. Marshall's wife had finally fashioned out of him a politely appreciative symphony patron, and he had reached a point where he basked a little in the greatness thrust upon him.

"Jazz? Not much! He seems to be making a study of folk music, and is using the quartets to that end. Told me he's gotten some interesting material especially from the Kroatians. Of course, the Italians eat out of his hand, for he speaks their language perfectly, I am told. He talked to me a lot about 'musical fundamentals' and the 'archaic modes' and the 'dominant rhythm' of the shops. I confess, it was too deep for me."

David rose, and the meeting informally split up into small groups as the men departed. As he left with Parker, David was saying, "Have posters of the concert printed, and push the thing all you can. If he has a nucleus of the foreign element united round him like that, you can't tell how useful he may be." As he climbed into his own car, he was smiling. "The young rascal," he muttered, and rode home in elation.

Judgment of people is prone to fall upon the level wherein the judge or jury finds itself most at home. Clerics, creed-stiff, but soaked in Izaac Walton to their ecclesiastical finger-tips, have consorted with

bar-keeps over flyfishing. Poets have loved butchers and dubbed them kings of mentality because, foresooth, they shared base ball together, and epicures have embraced gourmands on the latter's chance declaration of truffles as the best of food. The world still looks red to us through the bit of colored glass.

So Raleigh, in his fight with Mulgully, touched the spring common in all hearts, and measured himself by the shop's own scale. On music, the men might be dumb, to kindness indifferent, but pluck they knew. His quartets undoubtedly loved him, but to the majority of the men he was untried in fundamentals, was different, hence, lacking such trial, damned.

It happened in this wise, over a thing so small as a pay ticket. The pay ticket, resembling an express label, and with the hours of work done during the week tabulated down one side of it, required signature in full on the afternoon preceding the great Lupercal, pay day. Raleigh was sitting devouring ham sandwiches and grease, one of a group clustered for warmth round a cradle of cooling billets, in the inspection room. Giovanni Montefiore, swart and ecstatic, waved a bologna in one hand and a pickle in the other, and rolled his dark eyes heavenward in delight, as Raleigh recounted an episode in Tivoli, involving a drunken German officer and a pretty Italian girl. Raleigh swung from Italian to English and back again, and the men gaped in awe. All save Mulgully, the man of the retreating forehead,

who sat upon one corner of the inspection table, sneering to Doolins, and eating noisily. Raleigh finished his tale.

"Ah, marvilioso!" sighed Giovanni, with true Latin bliss in the dramatic, as Clarkson, a wan little clerk with a perpetually wilted collar and strings of lank hair, appeared with the pay tickets. Raleigh took his to the inspector's table, for writing surface, and signed—Dante Rossetti Raleigh. Mulgully, looking over his shoulder, burst into volcanic expletive.

"Hey, bo—" he sneered to Doolins, "get this for a moniker—", he bent down to read. "Dant Rossitty Raleigh—what the hell do you know about that!" Then, with loud inspiration—"Rosy!" he cried. "Ain't that a swell name now. Rosy!" His thick lips mouthed it, and his little eyes twinkled malevolently.

The men grinned and waited. This demanded prompt repartee in kind, or the silence of defeat. Raleigh straightened to his full height, which still brought his eyes below those of Mulgully, a giant.

"My name's Dante," he said quietly, tapping the card in his hand. His thoughts raced curiously, kaleidoscopic. "Now there'll be a row. I hate fighting. If they only understand anything but physical success. Freddy'll loathe me if I don't—what a beast this chap looks"—He waited.

Mulgully rolled his lips like a rooting pig. "Ah, hell," he sneered, thickly, turning a little aside, but looking at Raleigh a-slant under heavy lids, his

straight greasy hair dropping to his rough brows. "You're name's Rosy—Rosy—see?" He turned swaggering away towards Doolins.

The little group of men stirred slightly—Raleigh saw the unmistakable smile pass. It must be now. He whipped out a hand and swung Mulgully towards him.

"You're quite wrong," he enunciated sweetly, with an almost pedantic exactness of diction. "My name is Dante—Dan to my friends. I don't care to have my middle name twisted into an uncouth jest by a vulgar fool. Is that clear?"

Clear or not, his eyes and jaw made proclamation in language which even Mulgully and the men could understand. Mulgully leaned toward him and began to curse.

"Why, you— — ———— ——."

Raleigh raised his hand, delicately.

"Your breath is bad," he remarked with complete detachment, then suddenly flattened his hand against Mulgully's mouth, and thrust him, lunging, back.

Instantly he rushed, blind mad. Raleigh expectant, side-stepped, and drove to the other's jaw. With a guttural grunt of rage, the bigger man rocked a moment. Then he turned and rushed again. This time there was no avoiding. They clinched, and Raleigh felt his ribs crack as Mulgully hammered viciously at his kidneys. Like a slender spring Raleigh bent himself and broke from the clinch, his head whirling, his body racked. He

saw it was a question of keeping out of the way. He danced round Mulgully lightly, landing blows at which the other shook his head like a bull at flies.

For a few moments the fight rested there. Mulgully continued his rushes—Raleigh, ever retreating, dancing, watched for a place to land—watched for openings. They came—head, stomach, kidneys—Mulgully laid them all bare. "No science," thought Raleigh through a nebula of pain "but my God—he can't be hurt." It was so. Raleigh's blows landed again and again, but produced no more effect than a woodpecker on an iron pole.

Both men were panting now. Raleigh, jarred by a crashing blow on the jaw, was losing something of his springing, dancing retreat. As he circled, he glimpsed the crowd of watching men, and even to his blurring mind came the similarity of expression to that of an audience he had once seen at a bull fight. Then Govanni's face swung into vision, an olive epitome of apprehension, and McGill his eyes black with excitement, his plume of hair rampant, his features mirroring fear, affection, pride.

Raleigh's mind was working with a strange detachment. He was getting licked, licked, because he was not as big as the other man—and the workmen would always sneer at him—there was nothing, then but superiority of muscles, and a navvy might make mockery of a Wagner if he got him in a fight. Fiercely he rebelled against the animality of such a standard—he caught McGill's eye for a moment—

and read an imploring and a support there. Well—that's all there was to it—to justify himself—that was easy—but he must justify Freddy's belief in him. But Fred believed in him anyhow—or else he was not worth the having. Why not stop then, at once, before Mulgully hammered him into oblivion? As the question framed, Mulgully's fist reached the point of his chin, and Raleigh felt his head snap back, with skippering little chains of light at the back of his brain, and a whirling rush of color as the whole shop rose suddenly into the air, as in an elevator that he was not in.

He found suddenly that he was on the ground, Mulgully above him. The question repeated—why go on? After all he was *right*—that was all that mattered, ... there were shouts that reached him dimly, then he heard McGill's voice and felt a hand under his head. He shook it off, and clambered to his feet, the world spinning like a top tilting on an uneven axis. He saw Mulgully facing him, his face a sneer. Raleigh fell toward him, his hands going mechanically. He heard dim cries . . . "Hell, that's enough—let the kid alone—he's all in . . ."

Mulgully fended him off easily; then Raleigh slipped past his loose guard, and felt his fist sink into the soft part of the other's eye. The big man snarled surprise, and crashed through Raleigh's arms to his chest. This time he went flat—writhed—staggered up swaying drunkenly, seeing only Mulgully's face through a darkening veil of pain.

It was like taking gas, only not so pleasant, he thought. The last thing he remembered was falling slowly toward Mulgully, feeling an impact, and he was on the floor again—then, somehow, came the feeling that the world had metamorphosed slowly into a huge inverted cone, with Mulgully's face at the small end of it, the sneer wiped off, an expression of wonder there instead—and something else—he couldn't quite see—the cone whirled so. He was falling down the cone upon Mulgully's face . . . he mustn't land feet first—perhaps—but then, lumberjacks stamped each other's faces, didn't they? But he had a mind, and fine feeling—down, down, down. The cone dissolved into twisting like sparks, possibly atoms—that vanished in darkness, with a crying of "ning-ning-ning-ning" throbbing through it . . . Mulgully's face turned into a black cloud that was almost invisible, and suddenly, through the dark mist of it, he saw that eyes had grown suddenly all over the face, like seeds in a pomegranate. The eyes cried upon him in streams, cold, cold tears—tears without salt somehow, that ran down his neck, and as they ran, talked to him . . . it was McGill's voice that they used—he could almost make out the words "That's all right, boy—it's all right, kid—are yuh comin' round, buddy?" The tears flowed even more strongly. There really was no need for Mulgully to weep like that, and with all those eyes too—it seemed an almost indecent display of lachrymose potentiality, "just as if he'd had an eruption of eyes, and was showing 'em off,"

Raleigh thought—and they were damned cold, too . . .

He put up his hand to brush them off, and opened his own eyes, to find McGill supporting his head, and sousing him with water. Mulgully was bending over him—and his face still wore the expression of wonder—and through his blackening eye gleamed a profound respect. Raleigh started up—he mustn't quit—he was on his feet, swaying dizzily, and mechanically his hands went up to guard as he tottered toward Mulgully.

But that worthy hastily seized Raleigh's wrists in a titanic grip, and grinned—a warm grin, a grin of geniality. His big voice boomed out.

"That's all right kid—you're not licked—hell—" he rumbled wordlessly.

Raleigh still gazed, his head tingling with a million sharp pains.

"Then—then I'm not Rosy—or anything like that?"

Mulgully's rumbles crescendoed to a roar. He clapped one hand to Raleigh's shoulder, and gestured toward his own bluish eye with the other.

"I'll say you ain't! I was mistook. Say"—suddenly abashed by an unwonted emotion—"yu're all right, kid, yuh got the ole' stuff. Will yuh shake?"

Raleigh let out a deep breath. "Why, of course," he replied simply, and his hand crunched under the other's huge fingers. With a warm pressure, he turned away. He wanted to get out—to be alone. Though he knew his point was won, and that the

fight was after all to him, the reaction was strong upon him, and he hated it all at that moment—as he had never hated anything before in his life—the coarseness, the dirt—the lack of intimate intellectual companionship. He hated even his quartets, and thought with loathing of the perspiring faces in rows before him, and the rough jests, and the odor of seldom bathing. A wave of disgust flooded through him, and he thought suddenly of his study at college—of the three windows giving out to the upper porch—of the lines of dark, finely polished woodwork, of the soft hangings, and the glow of the shaded lamps, and the look of the bowl of roses under it, on his tea-table, and the fragrance of his beautifully bound books. A half sob of protest rose to his throat.

He felt a big arm flung across his shoulders, and raised his head to McGill, who had followed him as he walked blindly out into the crane yard. McGill looked at him with a strange tenderness. His voice shook.

"God—Dan—you're a bundle o' nerve to stand up to that big hunk of cheese like that. You—I" he fumbled huskily for words—"I'd go through hell for you, Dan," he finished awkwardly, his arm tightening round Raleigh's bent shoulders.

The boy glanced sidewise at McGill, at the sculptured lines of his head and throat, and met his eyes, suspiciously bright, and glowing deeply. His mood broke suddenly, and he laughed, a little unsteadily, and laid a swollen hand on the other's arm.

"Thanks, Freddy," he said quietly, but with everything in his tone.

Quite suddenly, all was right. He looked up at the brilliant sun, and round at the crane yard. Somehow it was all quite beautiful—the crane, crouched like a giant spider, with a web of cables stretching pattern-wise, its angled arms softened by the snow. The sky gleamed pure turquoise, and in the winter air had mysteriously woven a thread of spring. Years afterward, Raleigh remembered the crane yard of that morning, an etching in brown and white, with the sky cut into blue triangles by its cables; the far-off whisper of spring like the fragrance of laurel under snow, and McGill's fine eyes on him. Something had adjusted between himself and his surroundings and the charm that had lain for him in the picture of his study had laid itself like a spell on his present entourage. No longer he was banished from the world he loved; bigger, more vital, stronger, it was here around him. He laughed suddenly into McGill's deep eyes.

The whistle sounded, and they turned into the shop. As they reached the door of the hot-press shop, they passed Mulgully. Raleigh dug him gently in the ribs, and grinned into his face.

"You can call me Rosy all you like now," he said astonishingly, and hastened to his press.

And Rosy he became, proudly, to the men of the shop, who needed but this throne of unbeaten courage to exalt him.

Two nights thereafter, Mulgully appeared at a

quartet rehearsal and said "he reckoned he could make as much noise as the next one." He demanded to be taken in, and sang with a blissful disregard of pitch, rhythm, or text, but with such childlike glee that Raleigh had not the heart to say him nay, realizing that he was vaguely trying to make amends by interesting himself in Raleigh's doings. So he tucked him into an inconspicuous place and hushed as far as possible his fearful rumblings. Thereafter he remained, an amiable thunderstorm of muttering delight. With true Hellenic assimilation, Raleigh used him for a background of presses in a shop chanty he was composing.

CHAPTER VI

INDIGESTIBLE MANNA

A WEEK later, as lights began to glimmer from shops and motors, Raleigh dropped off his car at the Y.M.C.A., and made his way to the letter-boxes. As usual, the lobby seemed made up of men in a state of arrested tranquillity; most of them seemed to be sitting waiting for something. A few read; some talked. From the pool-room came the click of balls; from the cafeteria the effulgence of food and the clacking of heavy dishes. An odor peculiar to the place, and no other, hung in the air—a synthetic smell, composite of steam, restaurant, the rubber-and-soapy-sweat odor of a gymnasium, and some curious negative quality—perhaps the lack of much tobacco-smoke in a masculine entourage. Every Y.M.C.A. has it.

Raleigh crossed to the desk, and asked for his mail. After some delay the clerk, a man with stern eyes and a scarred cheek, opened his box and handed him his mail. Raleigh's eyes danced at one of the letters—in a hand he didn't know—small, regular, with short loops and graceful capitals and even com-

pression. He jagged it open with a quick forefinger.

"Dear Mr. Raleigh" it read. "You are quite right; I didn't play fair. Mr. Culhane told me about you, and I guessed you as the person he'd described. Will you come to tea Thursday at five thirty? And bring *Pelleas and Melisande* with you. I live directly across from Mr. Harde, and, as you are free at three-thirty you can make it without trouble, I think.

"Sincerely
"Eleanor Grayson."

Chuckling, he turned to the other letter. It was from his uncle, asking him to dinner—for Thursday night; the first notice that august gentleman had given of his existence. He grinned. Things moved. In high mood, he turned again to the desk.

"Oh, by the way," he said, "there's some things of mine have come by express. They're in the basement area-way. Can I get them taken up to my room?"

The clerk turned to someone he was serving with towel-tickets, and looked at Raleigh as a king might look at a cat.

"You'll have to see the janitor of the building," he replied, professionally affable. "We don't take care of these things." He started to turn back.

"Where'll I find him?" asked Raleigh, his mood of good humor suddenly quenched as by cool chemi-

cals. What *was* this powerful thing that they were all able to convey without words, this subtlety of superiority, like a saint set in a dance hall, and benevolently halo-ing surrounding sinners into oblivion?

The clerk turned to him with the wearidom of martyrs. "I don't know." Then, reluctantly, "His room is in the basement beyond the auditorium."

Raleigh sought the janitor. His blue-denimed legs, thrust atop a window ledge, never moved, nor did his eyes lift from the paper that held him thrall.

"Have to git a permit from the office," he grunted. "Fer the elevator man to move them things."

"But they sent me to you," answered Raleigh as pleasantly as possible. "I want to get them up to-night if I can."

The janitor rolled an eye toward him, then rolled it down again and jigged his paper. Raleigh stamped out and banged the door quite childishly behind him.

He went to the basement area-way, and dragged his boxes toward the elevator and pressed the button. The car descended and ascended to the main floor above him and only after indignant peals descended to the basement. Raleigh tugged at his boxes; the elevator man watched with detachment for a minute, and then began to close the elevator door.

"Here!" Raleigh straightened brusquely, presenting a red face. "Give me a hand with these, will you?"

"We carry no freight 'cept in the morning" he said flatly. He went off duty in five minutes, and

had no intention of having the flight clogged with furniture moving above. He again began to close the door.

"Oh damn!" Raleigh set his foot in the door and glared. "Why does everyone in this place try to make things as nasty as they can?"

The elevator man stared—and bristled. With the contempt for the poor that employees of institutions always have, he saw only a raggedly dressed big lad in a rage. "Who duh you think you are?" he sneered, with the patronage of which only a servant when he ruleth is capable.

Raleigh rew very composed. "Help me on with these things, please" he said briefly. "Or I'll see that you're dismissed. Ever hear of David Harde?"

David's continued and conspicuous donations to the Y.M.C.A. had haloed his name there with a light that shone even unto the elevator man. His face changed.

"Yes. Well he's my uncle."

Somehow the man saw beneath Raleigh's dirt at that moment. The boxes came.

An hour later, Raleigh's six by twelve coffin of a room was transformed. Most of the plaster-finished rooms were of a green nauseous beyond belief; but a few had escaped the eye of the contractor, and bloomed in a cheery and neutral buff. Of such was Raleigh's. Now, with chintz at the window and pillows on the couch, and Cezanne on the wall, it was transformed. Raleigh kicked the packing paper into the hall and fled to the pool for a swim.

By some architectural stupidity, the inmates of the Y.M.C.A. could not go, comfily bathgowned, from their rooms direct to the pool and showers, save by emerging upon a fire-escape, crossing a roof, and pounding on a door leading to the track. This pilgrimage with a two below zero wind was not inviting. And the door was always locked from within, anyhow.

In the elevator was the usual gathering of young men—and some not so young—some who were beginning to lose the firm outline of cheek and jaw, and about whose eyes were gathering a web of creases; men who had not arrived, and who, short of a miracle would not, now. Some of them had reached the tragic period of realization. The self-doubts, the vague, grey wonderings of what was wrong with them, why life had not given them what ten years ago they had, with laughter tipped lips, sought, was beginning to weigh them down.

Raleigh looked them over, quickly, as was his wont, and nodded to one or two whom he knew, with the curiously negative feeling one has for people whom one meets who mean nothing. Raleigh's psychology professor had once called him an esthetic anteater, who eagerly thrust forth a long tongue of curiosity and tasted every personality that came before him even for a moment. Thus he tasted the group in the elevator—one was roast beef, with heavy coloring and heavy ear lobes, one evidently horse radish, with his peaky ears and small bristled moustache and sharp grey suit.

Then he stopped tasting, and took a large mental bite of a boy slouched against the side of the car. His narrow face seemed inadequate setting for huge eyes that glittered restlessly, and darted from one person to another with a brilliance oddly variant with his relaxed attitude. They seemed his only really alive features. His clothing hung slackly on him, and the frayed edge of his soft collar stuck up under one ear.

The entrance to the locker room was barred by an iron grill, and one had to demand, and pay for, towels and soap at his portcullis, or go dripping. A small stooped man with moustaches like grizzled tufts of squirrel tails presided over the grill, a querelous Cerberus. Raleigh heard the boy ask for towels and soap. He always felt the towels were cast-off napkins from the cafeteria—in size and textures they seemed so.

"Where's yer ticket?" asked the attendant.

The boy looked blank, and muttered something in broken English. The attendant withdrew the towel.

"Ticket" he snapped "you have to have your ticket from the office—get it at the desk."

The boy turned a bewildered face to Raleigh.

"What he say?"

The man bellowed, after the manner of folk who construe lack of English into deafness.

"TICKET—get yer ticket at the DESK." He turned to Raleigh, who had produced his ticket. "Damn dirty foreigner" he growled.

This told. With a snarl of sudden rage the boy

flung himself at the grating. Raleigh's quick hand on his shoulder spun him about, his small face congested with anger. Raleigh shook his head.

"Don't," he said quietly. "It's no good doing that." To the attendant, "Here—take it off my ticket."

The man's face had flushed, and he looked ugly. "I'll, I'll report him," he stammered, his composure returning slowly.

Raleigh looked at him. "I wouldn't," he returned. "Perhaps if you didn't call him names it would help some. He didn't understand you. Let us by, will you?"

The door opened grudgingly. Raleigh dropped a sympathetic hand a moment to the lad's shoulder. He shot him a quick look of gratitude, shyly silent.

In the glow of swimming, the boy's tenseness relaxed, and he smiled a funny crooked little smile when encountering Raleigh at one corner.

They dressed together, chatting, and went to the cafeteria. Raleigh seized a tray and loaded it. His eyes, practiced through a year of restauranting to small economies, noted here and there an extra cent or so that adjacent eating houses didn't show.

Hanson, a shoe salesman, turned round and grinned when Raleigh nudged him with the tray.

"Hello, Raleigh. Say, I'm off'n this place after tonight." Hanson had also the practiced eye. "They stick a cent onta everything, and then act like they was doing you a favor to take yer coin. Watch this old bird."

The ancient fowl designated was a middle aged woman presiding sharply over the cash-register that terminated the line of food. "Eighty-seven," she announced dryly to Hanson.

"Eighty-two," replied Hanson firmly. He had built his total as he went along, and liked not this unwonted overtone in his financial chord.

"Eighty-seven," replied the old bird. She began chanting a litany of prices. Hanson stopped her at the tea. "Ten? It's five on your menu on the wall."

"Five for a cup—ten for a pot.."

"I asked for a cup—this is what I got. Never drink more than one cup. Don't want a pot."

The old bird snapped her beak. "I'll take it off" she snipped. "No gentleman would quarrel over a nickel."

"No gentleman would allow himself to be done by a nasty little graft," cut in Raleigh hotly, his tongue, as usual, leading him into vicarious defense. Hanson, who had not the gift of words, beamed at him gratefully.

"Atta boy—you tell her, kid."

As they sat down, the boy of the pool came hesitatingly, with a meager meal islanded on his tray. Raleigh beckoned to him.

"Sit down. Mr. Hanson, Mr.—I don't know your name."

"Smetana" returned the boy. Hanson grunted, with true middle class Anglo-Saxon suspicion of anything that ends in a vowel and does not expose three inches of shaved neck. They fell to eating.

"You sure told her where to get off," champed Hanson between bites. "Don't it beat hell how they throw it up to you all the time like they was handin' you something on a silver plate?"

Raleigh nodded. "Everyone takes the attitude you might expect at a charity home. They reach hands from heaven as if it hurt their backs."

Smetana's huge eyes darkened. "Dey call names, too" he muttered. "Dey say foreigner—dey say dirty. I *not* dirty,—I be American soon—I join de union——"

"Union? Where?"

" 'Ydraulic-Press-Steel."

Raleigh wondered in what department he worked, but didn't let on that he, too, had a number and badge in Dutton's office.

"Why, that's an open shop, isn't it?" he asked. "Why do you join a union?"

Smetana's little face caught fire from his eyes and became suddenly alive.

"Cause de union, he protect de workin' man. We must' 'ave living wage—we mus' be brudders together—these reech men, dey want all money, all 'ting. What we get if we not join de union? Jus' work all tam, hard all tam, den somet'ing happen" —his voice dropped, and Raleigh, watching him, saw his face harden suddenly, and it seemed to him that something stirred in the depths of the big eyes, like a half-guessed shadow seen at the bottom of a deep pool. It was only for an instant, but Raleigh drew a quick breath, and felt a cold finger on his

spine. That look was no parroting of the jargon of socialism and demagogues; some memory had stirred the boy to the quick. . . .

"Aw, rats!" Hanson cut short the silence angrily. "You fellas make me sick—you never think of anybody but yourselves—you're gettin' more pay now than you——"

"Hanse!" Raleigh held up a warning hand. "No socialistic arguments, please. It ruins my digestion and cramps my style. Come on—I'm going up to my room and smoke a cigarette, and break one of their pet rules."

He rose, Hanson with him. To Smetana he said kindly. "Drop into my room some night, will you? I'd like to talk with you. I'm in 513."

"Yes, sir," returned the boy, still flushed, and suddenly shy again. Hanson led to the elevators.

"Funny gink," he muttered, looking back at Smetana. "Rotten egg, I'd say. These foreigners make me sick, with their damned bunk. They're the kind that make all the trouble in this man's country."

"Maybe you're the kind, Hanse."

Hanson stared into Raleigh's grave face. "Me? How do you get that way?"

Raleigh looked at him soberly.

"Hanse" he said, "there's an old Hindu proverb that says, 'Of the tree of discord, its fruits are battles and bloodshed, but its roots are intolerance and intolerance.' It's true. Smetana's not a bad sort—he justs wants to be shown. But we—who have been here a little longer—we turn up our noses at him and

the millions like him because they don't talk English and have ideas that differ from ours. We avoid them like the plague. Then we howl frantically because they get into little Italies and Slovakias and Bohemias, in groups, don't learn English, misunderstand utterly the country, fall into the hands of rotten politicians and demagogues, or of real anarchists—and presently throw bombs. Nine-tenths of the foreign trouble is our own fault."

"Whew!" grinned Hanson—"got yer back up, didn't I?"

"You bet you did. Some time I'll take you all apart and put you together on the foreign question, my dear lad." His face fell suddenly sober again. "That's not what's wrong with Smetana, though. It's something deeper, more personal. Something terrible's happened to the boy. Did you notice his eyes just when he quit talking? Looked like there was a ghost inside them."

Hanson laughed.

"Aw, he's just sore on the world. I don't want 'em shooting off their mouths round me, that's all. If they need fixin', that's the government's job."

Raleigh clenched hands of mock despair above his head. "Idiot! That's just what I mean. Did it ever occur to you that *you* were the government?"

This held Hanson silent half way up in the elevator.

When they emerged—"Come down to my room for a little game, kid?"

"Sorry—I've got to write letters." Raleigh would

not for worlds have divulged his supreme ignorance of the art of craps. The argot was thrilling; he occasionally listened, fascinated by the incantations and imploring verbal ritual. But the miracle that occurred when everyone looked suddenly disgusted save one person, who scrabbled coins toward himself, had never dawned upon him.

They went separate ways along the concrete corridor. The corridors were a source of delight to Raleigh. On each floor they were the same, long and square and regularly lighted, with cement floors ruled like a sidewalk, and plaster tinted to applegreen. Applegreen, when flushing along the sky at sunset, or glowing from silken folds against the warm ivory of young breasts, and apple green applied to vistas of plaster, are as supple body to dried corpse. The effect of the well-meaning contractors had been to create a hospital lustre of ghastly brilliance that would have brought nausea to a goat.

Raleigh passed rows of doors regular as teeth in a comb, let himself into his own room, and sank with a sight of satisfaction into his small island of beauty. His tall lamp's subdued glow lent shadow and consequent space.

He had slipped into a sweater and lighted a cigarette with the added zest of petty crime, when there came a light knock.

"C'm in" bawled Raleigh, his eyes running over a quartet arrangement of "Kentucky Babe."

The door opened timidly to admit the Worm, who gazed at Raleigh with envy, awe, disapproval and

admiration crowding each other over his scant face. Raleigh waved his cigarette to the one chair.

"Sit down, boy—what's on your mind?"

The Worm—Raleigh had so named him from a characteristic of perpetual writhing—gazed with his wide-spread eyes winking regularly.

"Gee," he said presently. "Aren't you afraid they'll catch you smok'n?"

Raleigh snorted. "Do they suppose they can keep five hundred young men from smoking simply by making rules—as if we were all in prep schools!"

"Tisn't a *rule*" murmured the Worm, sidling into Raleigh's chair and hugging a note-book closer to him. "They just ask us not to smoke *cigarettes* in our rooms."

"Yes—and then snoop to see whether we do or not. Much better make it an out and out rule. They don't come out square on it, that's what annoys me so. 'We ask you not to smoke' they say and then pull long faces if you do." He puffed angrily, and dropped his eyes again to the quartet impatiently.

By this the Worm should have wriggled out. But he only writhed a little on the chair. His big light-blue eyes, with sparse pale lashes like occasional gorse along a Highland pool, fixed on Raleigh. He squirmed with embarrassment. Raleigh ignored him for a moment, then sat up, laughed, and blew a cloud of smoke at him.

"What is it? I'll bet you want me to subscribe to something. What's up?"

Thus adjured, the Worm rose on end.

"I—I wondered if you'd come to the Bible class meeting tonight," he vouchsafed shlyly.

"No, I won't." Then, less abruptly, "I'm sorry, old boy, but I honestly don't want to. I'd be no good whatever."

Clarkson's eyes winked thrice and his toes stirred the rug. "We—we thought that it might be a good thing for the floor." At a get-together dinner of his floor Raleigh had been elected, to his horror, "Social" Chairman.

Raleigh grinned, and visioned his philosophy class in college. "I don't think that it would. That's not my stunt, you know. I'll keep the floor amused, and get up parties for them—you can gather the lambs to the fold. Now run along—I've got to work—be a good child."

But the Worm was the willow wand of which martyrs are fashioned. He bowed at pressure, but sprang back to position with the patience of a snail.

"We wish you'd come" he said, squirming a little.

"Yes Raleigh, come join us, my boy" boomed a healthy voice from the doorway, and the beaming face of Crawley, the religious chairman, shone like a sun of virtue in Raleigh's door. He sniffed still beaming.

"Must have been a little fire in here," he glowed cheerfully, with a knowing wink at the Worm, who had begun undulating genuflections at his entrance. "Seems to me I smell smoke."

"It speaks volumes for your olfactory bulb" re-

turned Raleigh smoothly. "I just finished a particularly strong cigarette. Sit down, won't you?"

"No, thank you." The tolerance of his smile deepened. "I'm just trying to interest the boys in the Bible class tonight. You haven't been to any of our weekly meetings, have you, Mr. Raleigh?"

They focussed on Raleigh. He felt exceedingly uncomfortable, endured the battery of virtue for a moment, then succumbed.

"Oh, all right—I'll come along. How long does it last?"

"Just an hour" purred the Worm. His big eyes glowed, and he licked his lips a little.

"Little ghoul—he's tasting my saved soul" thought Raleigh, between exasperation and amusement. He rose. Crawley left them in the corridor, and trotted off to new fields.

Raleigh found eight or ten boys grouped round an oldish man at a little table, a Bible spread before him. His grey hair grew up harshly from a slanted high forehead, like frost touched bracken, and his little eyes peered from beneath heavy lids. Large moustaches further eclipsed his chin. Raleigh glanced round. It was a miscellaneous group. All of them he had seen at odd times, but usually in the fragmentary nakedness of the lavatories. Hanson and McAllister grinned at him from the couch, grinned the comradeship of the unregenerate. Raleigh struck, as usual, an original color note, looking rather like the Chesterfield cigarette man in his athletic sweater with its big purple letter. The old

man at the table slanted a haggletoothed smile in his direction and held out a horny hand.

"Good evening, my young friend," he chanted. "My name's Brahley. And you are——"

"Raleigh, sir." He suddenly foresaw what kind of an evening it was to be, and sank beside Hanson dismally. The latter nudged him and whispered:

"Roped you in, too, Kid? I jest had time to slip the ivories under the bed. I couldn't break away."

Brahley had begun to gather eyes, and held up a finger.

"We'll open the evening with prayer" he said firmly, and did. At the end heads bobbed up. Everyone looked at everyone else, then quickly away, with the furtive embarrassment of children caught defending belief in fairies. Brahley donned spectacles.

"Now boys. You remember we talked about the miracles last time. We're a going to talk tonight about the greatest miracle of all—the virgin birth. Lots of folks'll tell you nowadays it ain't so at all, but they're wrong." He picked up the Bible and began to read.

Raleigh gasped in outraged amazement, as the monotonous ignorant voice began rooting its way through the exalted and frightening beauty of the words. The group listened; Hanson and McAllister exchanged winks and whispers. It was like seeing a beautiful and innocent woman stripped by careless hands before an uncouth crowd.

The voice ceased. Brahley tucked his chin under the eaves of his moustache and slowly looked round.

The listeners kept their eyes on the floor—or ceiling.

"Now," he began heavily. "This here's the absolute truth what I've been readin.' This book's the voice of God; and it's inspired—it's the divine truth, every single word of it. Folks'll tell you it's jest a way of talkin'—that these sacred words ain't straight from the mouth o' God."

He gazed round again solemnly. No one moved.

"That's the devil's voice a' speakin'. People that heark to that voice their souls'll suffer." He paused a bit helplessly. Perhaps he felt the force of Raleigh's passionate antipathy. He cleared his throat. "What do you fellows think about it?"

No eye met another eye. Feet twitched uneasily. An embarrassment hung in the air as when a faux-pas of cosmic proportion buries speech under an avalanche of silence. To the casually minded youth of twenty-four—the American youth, his soul is a thing that he would no more discuss in public than he would his navel or his ideals. It is essentially emotional in character, and like all emotions, taboo for conversation. The boys squirmed a little. It was exquisite torture. The silence deepened till it was oppressive. Then Raleigh spoke, more to break it than anything else. His voice had a draw in it like the cut from a blade of grass.

"Do I understand you to say that we are to believe literally, as we believe a surveyor's report, in every word in the Bible?"

Brahley nodded solemnly. The others breathed

with relief. Raleigh brushed his hand across his eyes, and his voice carried his amazement.

"You mean—to be 'saved,' as you say, one must accept as *literally* true every word between Genesis and Revelation on the face value of the very words? That, phrased as you read them, they came straight from God?"

By this time they were all looking at Raleigh. Hanson pinched him shyly, but he was too much in earnest to notice. Brahley frowned and tapped the Bible with his thumb-nail.

"My young friend, this is the work of God, and the words of God are inspired straight from the heavenly throne."

"I see. But which words? The original Hebrew and Greek, or the later Greek, or the classical Latin, or the Vulgate, or the King James version? Even the sense of a passage is affected by translations like that. Which words are literally true?"

Brahley lost his temper. He was an earnest man in his way, and he wrongly sensed ridicule back of Raleigh's question. He swept his arm out.

"I don't know anything about that" he thundered. "But it don't take no high-fallutin' learnin' to know God's truth. Whatta I care bout Greek and Latin and things like that? This here book is inspired from heaven direct, every word of it."

Raleigh flamed. Here was his lifelong foe, mounted, stirruped and helmeted—narrowness riding the hoofs of ignorance.

"I suppose you include the punctuation" he

snapped hotly, and instantly regretted it, as titters culminated in a guffaw or two. Brahley flushed heavily.

"Look here, young man, if you came here to ridicule and laugh——"

"Pardon me. I didn't. I shouldn't have said that. I'm sorry. I had no intention of offending you. I thought discussion was what you wanted." He half rose. Hanson pulled him down. Hanson was hugely enjoying himself.

"It is." This unexpectedly from one of the boys sitting on the floor, a dark-eyed swarthy lad with strong features. "I'm studying chemistry here. Science teaches you that the laws of nature can't be broken. In the Bible they're broken all the time. How about it?"

Brahley felt the tides of doubt rising about him and his own impotence to climb to loftier levels for defense. He turned on Raleigh as the cause of the flood.

"Young man"—with an accusing forefinger—"do you or do you not believe in the Immaculate Conception?"

"If you mean a distortion of biology, I certainly do not."

There was a short silence. Then Brahley's eyes turned up and closed, and his lips began to move. He folded his thumbs across his stomach.

Raleigh bounced to his feet. "Don't you *dare* to pray at me," he cried like a whip-crack. It jerked Brahley's eyes open to a stupefied stare. The room jumped. Raleigh swept on.

"This is the sort of thing that makes atheists, this stupid bickering about petty things. You talk about direct literal inspiration of every word in the Bible. What possible difference does it make? You could change every phrase, and still keep the thought that revolutionized the religion of half a world. No, listen to me."

Brahley had tried to speak.

"If it makes you happier or better to believe them literally, do so. But please let *me* keep my science in my mind and my belief in my heart, where they don't fight. To me, it is a cheap thing to think that nature's most fundamental law was broken or distorted so that Christ could be born. Isn't he a much bigger person born like any other man, without any headstart? And what does it matter whether the loaves and fishes *did* multiply, or the dead man *did* rise? The important thing—the beautiful thing—is that spiritual beauty spread, and a man got a new conceptional life that *did* make him over from dead to living.

"You bury the beauty and the bigness of it under little crumbs of bickering." He stopped suddenly, head up, his back against the wall. The group around the room had perked up on spines-ends like splinters to a magnet. They looked with horror or delight from one to the other. The fight instinct glowed in their eyes.

Then Brahley found words and breath, and clamored heavily.

"Young man" his voice was sepulchral "if you

want to save your soul you'd better pray to God to make you——"

But Raleigh cut in, his short stock of patience gone.

"I've no desire to have my soul discussed by you or anyone else. I—I care too much for spiritual beauty to hear it mangled in public by someone hired for the purpose." The door banged behind him. He raced down the corridor, a flag drenched in a thunderstorm.

Fifteen minutes later, as he was gazing unseeingly out of the window, Hanson, McAllister and two others burst into his room, roaring with excitement.

"Boy—boy—I'll say you can tell 'em," cried Hanson. "Old Brahley is up in the air and spread out like a planked fish. Says you're goin' to hell sure. My *God,* what does he take us for, a crowd of Sunday School kids? I'd like to hear some more of your dope sometime—it listens like sense, but this Christer stuff——"

McAllister leaned over Raleigh. "Come on, boy—we're all goin' down to Fortunio's—it's early yet, an' then I know where you can dance with some swell queens—I know a little lady who——"

Hanson joined. "Come on, Raleigh—let's go. Fortunio's got every*thing*—cocktails, hookers——"

It dove-tailed into Raleigh's mood of revulsion without a wrinkle.

"Sure I'll go" he cried with alacrity. "We'll get blind and sing."

McAllister seized his hat and strode out. "Come on—I wanta get that guy's bunk outta my system."

Later in the whirling end of an evening, with his hands weaving lilting patterns on a clanging piano in a very cheap and very drunken dance hall above somebody or other's "restaurant," he suddenly remembered McAllister's remark, and his face as he said it—a satyr stirring under its fine-tanned skin and gleaming through its commonly handsome features. He remembered, because McAllister had suddenly become conspicuous through his absence, having departed unsteadily but unmistakably with a vivid-breasted girl. Raleigh's hands crashed abruptly to a discord. He removed the white, reekingly perfumed arm from his neck, and rose suddenly bitter, his head rocketing a little from drink, McAllister's reaction and its possible tragedy before his eyes.

"Damn all Brahleys" he muttered. He stooped and kissed the girl beside him lightly on the cheek. She gurgled at him boozily, and sought to twine him with her arms.

"Good night, my dear," he said soberly, unwinding her carefully. Then, quickly, "Did anyone ever tell you you'd go to hell if you weren't so good it took all the pleasure out of life?"

The girl drew back, her eyes suddenly shrewd. Then she laughed. Another queer one.

"Say—I was drug to Sunday School by an aunt for five years. They always handed out that line—leastways, at mine they did. I beat it." She leered

up at Raleigh. "Never thought I'd been there, did you, ole' thing?"

Raleigh slipped out of her arms. "I was sure of it" he returned over his shoulders. "Good night."

. . . . . .

Smetana sat in his small bare room, his relaxed hands hanging over his knees, his white wedge of a face waxy in the moonlight that should have softened and beautified it. But instead it merely looked more tense. His mind was full of Raleigh. He tingled at the memory of his kindly voice and the friendly thump of his big hand. It was the first time that anyone had spoken to him in kindness or touched him in sympathy since his cousin's death. He smiled softly for a moment.

Then the whirring in his mind again asserted itself. It had grown slowly, steadily; it was as if he stood on a lonely long road, and far off, where the sides of it met at the horizon, something was spinning toward him. He could hear the spinning very plainly now, and knew that it was his mind. It was dry, hard, like a wheel that spins in a dry hearing. But there was something wrong with it—it could not find its center. On the polished sheen of its spinning disk rose pictures, drawn out sideways and distorted—the crushed feet of his cousin—the sister's grief-sodden face—but they always vanished before the smiling face of the man in the touring car. The smile seemed to sing too, and made a whirling sound of its own, faintly.

He stirred uneasily. That spinning sound never left him now. It was a lonely sound, like the wires of telephones along an empty road at dusk. "WHY —WHY—WHY—WHY," it sang. There was something of compulsion in it too. It was as if the whirling cry was drawing closer round the unknown center, seeking a point upon which to converge its snarling, thin hatred. It seemed to urge him to find this center, as if that focus were the only thing needed to draw it into a powerful point, to fuse that dry, spinning whine into shriek of action. Slowly, imperceptibly, the whole swift-circling disk was drawing closer, searching, urging.

Two red spots crept into the white cheeks. Behind his eyes the thing that Raleigh had seen there moved like a caged animal.

CHAPTER VII

MANICURES AND MORALS

"BUT Eleanor" protested Mrs. Grayson, "don't you think it is a little unusual to ask a perfectly strange young man to tea?"

"It's because he is perfectly strange and more than a little unusual that I'm asking him, Eva dear" returned Eleanor. "He's the first really interesting person I've seen since I've been home. Anyone who can read 'Pelleas' on a trolley that smells like a garlic sandwich is worth knowing. Either he has the concentration of an Edison or no olfactory organs. Either is a diverting possibility."

Mrs. Grayson sighed, and shook her earrings. She moved across, gliding as do middle-aged women who somehow convey an impression of floating leglessness, and paused at the door.

"But Eleanor—is he a gentleman?" It was her exit line.

"That, Eva, depends on what you judge him by. His occupation, according to Pat Culhane is" she consulted a small notebook on her desk—"is 'press-hand on hotpress No. 5, in shop five."

Mrs. Grayson made a sound like a strangling duck, but Eleanor proceeded unpurturbed.

"His clothes—what I saw of them—came, I should say, from New York and Paris, and had crossed many Rubicons. His vocabulary is a little like Huneker; his—let me see, what else does one judge a gentleman by—oh yes, his hands. Well, his hands looked like Peter's do after he's greased the Packard's transmission. You can take your choice."

"He sounds like a crowd to me" murmured Mrs. Grayson, amused in spite of herself. "However, as you've asked him, there seems to be nothing to do. If he cuts your throat and makes off with the silver, don't blame me. Are you going to the Vermylias' theatre party?"

"I'm afraid not. A shaded box and entr' acte music would give Vernon another chance to propose, and I don't think I can endure that again—at least for a week. And now——"

She saw her mother's chins set, and knew what was coming. "I don't see why you——"

"And now" went on Eleanor firmly, "I think I'll wash the Sapinski baby from my hands, and," she paused a moment before the long Louis Quinze mirror "go down to Madame Lestrange's for the well-known wave of permanence."

Mrs. Grayson's chins remained set. She folded her hands before her.

"I don't see why you *will* spend all your time at the Sapinski's."

Eleanor's lips tightened a little. "I don't. I'm at the Kalousdians and Borofskis quite as much."

Mrs. Grayson waved a plump hand. "I mean with all these—people. It's all very fine, and you doubtless do an immense amount of good, but your friends never see you any more. I saw Helen Storey at Blumenthal's yesterday morning—you know—that sale of lingerie I told you about, and she said Bob Trevor told her you weren't at Anne Wycherly's Thé Dansant and that—"

Eleanor went swiftly to her mother and put her hands on that lady's plump and modish shoulders.

"Eva dear, please—*please!* Don't you understand yet? These people bore me till I want to scream. I know it sounds frightfully conceited and horrid, but they seem just like a row of dolls, or marionettes. It was all right before France, but—" she dropped her hands from her mother's shoulders with a rueful little smile. "Oh, it's no use. You cannot understand, of course."

Mrs. Grayson regarded her daughter with more keenness than her sleek air of slight petulance revealed.

"Just what was there about France that has made people into dolls for you?"

Eleanor looked up quickly and moved restlessly about her room, her hands clasped behind her, a gesture that Mrs. Grayson knew meant with her control:

"Oh—I don't know—everything was so *real*—it was like electric wires with the insulation pulled off —contacts—of course some of it was horrid, but

everyone was so alive, and the work—you didn't have a minute to think about yourself and consequently get bored—it was just the France of 1917, that's all." She moved toward the bathroom.

Mrs. Grayson was thinking to herself that no woman was ever as affected by an abstraction as her daughter appeared to be by the France of 1917. To her there was a person under it. Wisely she had never voiced this. She was a kind woman when she did not try to be clever.

Eleanor threw her a smile. "Don't worry about me, Eva. In the course of time I'll doubtless become an old and happy maid. Or else I'll marry someone like Vernon Vermylia, with a beautiful chin and no conversation, or a scentel serpent like Bob Trevor. Bob's idea of entertainment is to balance a teacup on one knee, and talk about Life with an extended little finger in a pink voice." ("I'm making him sound a little like something out of Alice in Wonderland, I must say" she thought.) She entered the bathroom and violently opened the hot water.

Mrs. Grayson stared after her.

"Just why" she observed "a year's ambulance driving in France should unfit you for enjoying your friends, I cannot quite discern."

Eleanor's voice resounded from the depths of the bathroom.

"It hasn't. It's unfitted them for enjoying me. It's a continual masquerade with me. If I didn't quiver like a jellyfish over the latest baby or Isabelle Meighan's divorce, I'd be considered 'queer.' If I

disturbed Harry Anderson's monologue about golf with a question on books, I would be finished socially. Fortunately it's fairly easy to be a sausage grinder, and turn out linked platitudes, each one tied up with a confiding smile and bulging with candor."

Miss Grayson's delightful, melodious voice had edged itself, and her mother raised one eyebrow. She allowed a little silence to be filled only with the sounds of Eleanor's vigorous ablutions, then said gently.

"I'll have Mary make some of those brownies you like so much for tea, dear." She went out.

Eleanor smiled to herself, and wiped her fingers. What a trump Eva was, in most ways. Eleanor did not herself understand exactly what had drawn her out of her warmed, pleasant life, filled with innumerable small things, into the active expression that her mother so failed to understand. At least—she wasn't sure of the reason. She had put it resolutely out of her mind, and the months of work had served to largely efface it. This work had grown. Beginning in a very small way through a dinner at David Harde's and subsequent talk with Parker of the Welfare Department through coffee and cigarettes, the channel thus opened had spread and widened before the stifled energy she poured into it. At first, it had not been easy—this work of showing tired women how to laugh and fretted children how to play, of developing latent self-resource for amusement. But the months of experience abroad, as naked of conventionality as a

baby of clothes, had bequeathed to Eleanor a gift utterly foreign to her—an easy contact with the Sapinski baby that made it her small tyrant, and its mother her shy worshipper. Without realization, the work had all grown until now it took most of her day; and if she occasionally felt a weariness creeping up her back, she remembered the weariness it had banished from her brain and was glad.

She hurried out of the house, climbed into her sedan, and moved off down Devonshire drive to the city. In a snarl of traffic she encountered a truck. There were words. The driver, a young rough in a greasy army coat, glared at her. Eleanor recognized his faded shoulder-badge. He mumbled something about "damn women drivers."

Eleanor shot back at him.

"Don't talk to me about women" she snapped. "I'll wager you're one of the silly sheep that drove down the embankment outside Nancy and blocked reserve artillery for hours." She grinned at his blank look of chagrin, and whisked off ahead of him as the traffic whistle blew.

She drew up before Madame Lestrange's, already basking mentally in the Lethean relaxation that lady's rigid fingers always imparted. A curtain divided Madame's temple to tonsorial and manual beauty into two parts; an outer court, where the masculine might—and did—come to acquire the gleaming terminals of the perfect manicure, and an inner shrine where women bared their scalps' secrets to professional confessors discreet as any priest.

Madame Lestrange bore down on her like an ocean liner—a large, firm lady with brushed up eyebrows and hair of perpetual surprise, and shining black orbs a trifle bulgent. She was incurably romantic, as are so many large ladies. She mourned a husband who had been a barber. Madame Lestrange, telling you of him, managed to convey with the greatest delicacy, and between sighs of affection for the defunct Victor, that she had married beneath her.

"Ah, ma petite mademoiselle Gree-szong" she cried, and floated her out of her wraps and into her own chair next the dividing curtain on a steady stream of light French. Eleanor had walked straight into her heart a year before, with her fluent tongue, and her easy knowledge of Madame's Mecca, Amiens. She had the true provincial scorn of Paris. Her voice continued to ripple about her, as Eleanor's hair rippled down her back. Her monologue always diverted Eleanor; this morning it interested her particularly.

"But mademoiselle, it is too true! These women, they come here, with no knowledge of that which is fitting, and they say, of a high voice 'Gimme the best yu've got!'" The exactness of her French mimicry brought a giggle from Eleanor. Madame's eyes rolled to heaven. *"Mais oui,* mademoiselle! As if always they had had the *bonne*—and one might see, at a glance of the eye, that they had known never the ways of a *femme du monde.* But think mademoiselle! Only yesterday comes a large woman

—I was a reed beside her, mademoiselle, oh very large, and of the hairs blondine; it was in the morning, even as now, and she wore long earrings of the pearls false, and platinum chains and a necklace completely of large blue stones like eggs. She desired the perfumes. I showed. She asked 'Is this best?' and ask the price. Then did she put her nose even more up, which mademoiselle knows, was difficult, for it was long, and pointed to her breast, and demand something better, which is to say, of a greater price! And she is depart, *cette petite bonne dame,* with a bottle of a L'Origan de Coty!" Madame sniffed, and began shampooing Eleanor's hair vigorously in the initial rite of the permanent wave.

"But who are these women, and who are their husbands?" asked Eleanor from under the shadow of her hair.

Madame Lestrange snorted, and her eyebrows rushed toward her hair like mice to cover.

"Who but these men of the war-wage, of the factory, mademoiselle? Never have they known such, and still it is more more more. And the poor girl in the shop, and the young clerks who work in offices—"

She broke off to seize a bottle of hair tonic and began deluging Eleanor with it. The more she talked the faster went her hands, until Eleanor was being showered. She rattled on.

"But fancy mademoiselle—one of my girls—you noticed, Mees Freegs, of the golden hair outside, in the outer room—a sweet cabbage, mademoiselle.

She has a friend. He is of the papers—*les journaux*. He writes of police and murders—most charmingly. They would wed, and may not, because of his small wage. It is disgrace!"

"Why Madame, you talk like a violent reactionary" cried Eleanor, amused and not a little interested. "Why do these women irritate you? Isn't their money as acceptable as anyone's?"

Madame gazed at her reproachfully in the mirror. "But mademoiselle—of course. Yet" she hesitated "it is not fitting, that these women, of no taste, no —no appreciation of the fine things, should thus be able to have them simply by buying. It is not *juste.*" An old old ancestor, who had bequeathed Madame her flat little ears and imperiously poised head—perhaps the Duc d'Amiens had been a heady young man—spoke arrogantly in Madame's voice.

Eleanor's mind had veered to her own work. One of her problems had been to try to transform the flooding tide of silk shirts, eighteen dollar shoes, expensive and ugly ties, and jewelry beyond the macabre dreams of bad taste, into a new ice-box—a vacuum cleaner—a growing balance in the check book and to prophecy, without offense, the inevitable morrow of lay-offs and falling wages.

Her reflections were rudely broken. An undercurrent of voice from the outer room which had been running unobtrusively in the back of her mind, rose suddenly to the surface, and scattered her thoughts as a rising trout scatters minnows.

"Well, of all the cheek! You get right out of

here, this minute!" The voice resounded brassily, and its clangs transfixed Madame Lestrange's active fingers.

A low-pitched and apologetic masculine made answer they could not catch.

"Didn't do nuthin', hey? I'll tell the world you didn't do nuthin' to me, you old daffy-dill. You ain't no gentleman—*you ain't no gentleman.* Get out of here right now, or I'll call Madame Lestrange and have you throwed out!" The voice was scintillant with outraged virtue.

Never so silently leaped the panther as Madame Lestrange and Eleanor. Amid a shower of hair tonic they sprang to the curtain, and peeked.

A middle-aged man, very red of face, was gathering up coat, hat, and gloves in one stride to the door. He flung a bill on the counter as he passed. It was a quick clean exit, but not too quick for Eleanor to recognize the greyed dark hair, the full, sleekly handsome face, the emotionless grey eyes. Then the door slammed, and Corinne Friggs, she of the police reporter friend, turned loftily to the mirror, her balloon-like and brilliantined puffs quivering with indignation. Marceline Mulvaney, her compeer, surveyed her with burning curiosity.

"What'd he do to yuh?" she asked eagerly.

Corinne tossed her puffs.

"The ole fool—" The other girl calmly cut her off and drew nearer.

"What did he *do* to yuh?"

Pinned to the specific, Corinne showed faint signs

of embarrassment. "Oh," she said grandly, "he begun squeezin' my hand. I didn't pay no attention to that—they all do. Then he begun squeezing my knee under the table, the ole fool." She walked off down the shop, surrounded by an aura of righteousness like a Fra Angelico saint.

Eleanor withdrew an amazed face, then burst into peals of mirth. He—of all people in the world! She laughed till she cried, and Madame Lestrange had to caution her against the effect of salt to the permanent wave.

Corinne Friggs continued to gaze loftily from the window. What had given greater edge to her denunciatory voice and heightened color to her cheeks was that, to her conventional horror, she had rather liked the squeezing.

CHAPTER VIII

APPLIED UPLIFT

RALEIGH leaped into his clothes that afternoon with such agility that McGill, who had secured an adjacent locker, stared at him.

"What's the big rush?" he asked.

Raleigh's voice came muffled from the depths of the locker ". . . tea," was all Fred gathered. Then a flushed face appeared. "You'd better hump yourself if you're going on the same trolley with me."

Thus adjured, Fred humped, and the two tall young men swung out together. Raleigh fished for cigarettes, gave one to Fred, and they were off—a strangely different pair, but linked with the kinship of youth and abounding vitality. To Raleigh, McGill had proved himself indeed an Everyman in his industrial Pilgrim's Progress. He suspected it was largely Fred's secret words that had secured him the foremanship of his press on Robert's defection. In this he was wrong; it was his own intelligence, and the swift prominence his fight with Mulgully had given him. Culhane had chuckled over it.

"May be a fool, but he's got the stuff," the foreman had thought, and had told David Harde as much in recounting the incident to him.

To McGill, Raleigh presented an enigma. His unconcealed liking had flattered and pleased him. His naivete on matters mechanic amused him. Most of all, his startling moods of frankness, his talk, like someone out of a book, puzzled and intrigued McGill's less complex mind. It was characteristic that he sought no explanations; that he swiftly took Raleigh to his heart as a bewildering but very real pal, and accorded him inarticulate and ceaseless devotion. Whole planets separated them as to intellectual interests. On only one tangible point did they touch—music. Here Raleigh had stirred unexpected and vague depths. They had journeyed, on a night early in their friendship, to the movies, and, from the remoteness of the "smoking stalls," watched silently and with few words. Then the orchestra had without warning emerged from some pilly-willy syncopation into the prelude to Tristan. Raleigh had settled back and watched his friend curiously. The great house, under the spell, had gradually stilled. At first Fred seemed undisturbed. Then he slowly grew very quiet, and his cigarette burnt out. The music lifted, swelled, and leaped into glorious crescendo. Fred took a quick breath, and his hand shot out to Raleigh's arm and gripped it. The display of emotion startled him, as did Fred's face when the lights flashed up and showed it with tears dropping from his eyes. Raleigh's heart

leaped at the unconscious revelation. McGill gulped, and blew his nose.

"My God," he whispered.

Thereafter he had sat, hours on end, while Raleigh improvised in the twilight of that intimate musical borderland nearest the musician's heart—played with a consciousness of the big lad's stimulation, of the dumb sympathy to which he was giving vicarious expression, the depths of Celtic emotionalism so carefully concealed beneath McGill's bluff and casual exterior. This unexpected innate response had been the meat and drink of human sympathy to Raleigh without which the artist starves. No amount of intellectual sophistication or drawing room glibness for a moment supplies it.

They boarded the trolley and struggled to seats at the end.

"Say Raleigh—I gotta new guy for the quartets."

"Fine; can he sing?"

"You're damn tootin'. Heard him out in the crane yard last noon. He's got a voice most like a girl—high and awful sweet-soundin'."

Raleigh clutched him. "A *tenor*" he cried, with the rapture of all leaders of amateur singing where those *rarae aves* are concerned. "Bring him tomorrow night if you have to leash him. Don't care if he knows a note—I can teach him. That makes only two more that we've got to find. What's his name?"

"I forget. But I know where he works. Runs the magnet crane. He wants to come—says he

knows you—lives at the Y. M. C. A. himself. He says 'Ah, the Meester Raleigh,' he says, 'he has the heart of kindness.' He's a sad lookin' little pup; cousin of that guy was killed when you first came."

Raleigh's countenance softened. "I wonder where I saw him?" he murmured. It spoke for the numbers who had experienced the "heart of kindness."

"Oh" he turned to Freddy with sudden animation. "Did I tell you that Parker fell on my neck about the concert? Says he'd love to have us put on a stunt, and gave me *carte blanche*. I think we can do something really interesting—all the bunch is crazy to give a minstrel show—and I can work in some real quartet singing, too."

McGill was seized with thought. "Say—I most forgot. Ma wants you to come out for dinner Sunday. Will you?"

"I'd love to. I was so sorry that I couldn't come before, but I'd have been no possible use. I was in a mood. It was that poor old elephant of a Mulgully. One might as well allow oneself to be annoyed by a warehouse. But I was. I'm glad that's over, Fred. I wonder when people will stop considering men effeminate if they use pollysyllables and display a germ of feeling?"

This Fred wisely chose not to answer. "Ma says if she don't see you soon she won't believe there is any you, an' Peggy said she was comin' down to the shop some day and stand outside and whistle some

highbrow tune like 'Humoresque' till everybody gets out. She knows that'll fetch you."

"I'd fly at her with rapture" laughed Raleigh. "She's the little one, isn't she, who tied the wrong tooth to the door and pulled it out?"

"Naw—that's Annie. Peg's nineteen last May. Say, if you think I like music, you oughtta see her. She eats it up. She's a funny girl; when she was little she used to go out in the back yard and sit under a bush talkin' to people that wasn't there at all. She's always been—" Fred groped for a tenuous distinction "different, somehow—maybe 'cause she went to school longer than us boys. You'll like her."

"I'm sure I will" returned Raleigh somewhat absently. His mind was picturing Eleanor Grayson behind a tea table, and from this comforting vision had turned to the selection of a necktie with the greatest care.

"Listen," McGill intervened between the choice of the one with gold butterflies and an austere silver and black stripe. "Why don't you and me go to a show Saturday night? Then you can come home with me and be right there for breakfast?"

"Fine. Love to." The trolley slowed to 55th Street, and Raleigh rose hastily. "Bye, Fred" he called, and catapulted for the door, leaving a swathe of sudden vacancy and a ripple of profanity in the crowded car.

At the Y. M. C. A. he flung off his clothes, bathed, and twenty minutes later emerged, a changed being,

immaculate and shining, with the comfortable assurance of good clothes, and a stick, and new pair of gloves wrapping him round. At the desk the clerk gave him his mail—with a smile of sinister meaning. He saw an envelope with the red triangle in the corner, and with a sudden loss of assurance, glanced quickly down the page.

". . . We have investigated the matter thoroughly and regret that we see no other course than to ask you to leave the building. This is unfortunate, for we feel that what you are doing with the singing in your shop is worthy work. But your conduct and speech deeply offended our Mr. Brahley, and we fear that your attitude on religious matters is such as to be gravely detrimental to the spirit which, by precept and example, we seek to foster.

"We shall consider your room as available a week from next Saturday.

"Most sincerely

"Reginald Augustus Stokes,

"General Sec'y."

Raleigh started for a moment unbelieving, then a gust of rage shook him. He turned on the clerk at the desk, who had been watching him furtively. The clerk looked hastily down.

"Where's Mr. Stokes?" demanded Raleigh hotly.

"His office is upstairs. He won't return till 5:15."

Raleigh glanced at the clock. Four twenty. He bit his lip. Then suddenly he threw back his head

and laughed so loudly that the clerk at the desk looked a little frightened. He'd have something amusing to tell Eleanor Grayson, anyhow.

"Tell him Mr. Raleigh wants to see him tomorrow."

The clerk began raising little barriers. "You'll have to make an appointment through the office"—

But Raleigh had turned on his heel. "Oh, go to the devil" he grinned cheerfully, waved his stick at the horrified clerk, and went out whistling.

CHAPTER IX

MANICURIAL CONSEQUENCES

HE was greeted by a tall and solemn butler, a darky with a face the color and dignity of Rameses II, so kindly preserved to us in the Metropolitan Museum. With a sudden swift rush of pleasure Raleigh surrended stick, hat and gloves, his ruffled feathers smoothing more and more, until, when the old fellow slipped off his coat and adjusted his collar with a respectful pat, he drew a deep breath and began to purr with delight. Rameses departed, on his inquiry for Miss Grayson, and he looked round. There was no need to analyze the fine old pictures, the shaded lamps, the peep of an Aubusson carpet glimpsed through an open door, the rich quiet and luxurious warmth. Raleigh bathed in it like a Sybarite.

Rameses, a tall shadow, strode softly back. He grinned suddenly, and his face split into a million fine lines like a crackle-ware plate.

"Miss Eleanuh's waitin' fo' you, suh."

Raleigh paused at the door for an instant. Never was a deliberate *mis-en-scene* of Eleanor's making

—and they were many—more instantly appreciated. He crossed the room quickly and she gave him a firm small hand, then swept his figure appreciatively, and laughed, the Chopin waltz of a laugh that he remembered.

"I knew you'd give me an inkling somehow," he cried triumphantly after the first greetings.

She made a little grimace. "I had to. You were so abominably composed."

"That was bluff. I nearly fell out of the trolley after you. I'm glad the bluff worked. How in the world—you said in the note that Culhane told you about me."

She nodded, laughing.

"May I ask where you encountered my Cuchulain of a boss? Don't tell me you work at the Hydraulic, too?"

"Well—I do. In a way, that is. Lemon or cream, Mr. Raleigh?" She was pouring tea into a fragile cup of green lustre.

Raleigh leaned back, half closing his eyes, and looked. Behind her the top of a Victorian tip-table drew a circling pattern of old gold and roses, of which her small head with its gold-shot brown hair formed the centre. Firelight and candles glowed gently.

"Beautiful words!" he sighed. "It's been at least two months since I've heard them. Lemon, please, and mountains of sugar. 'Cream or lemon, Mr. Raleigh?' " He repeated it like a refrain.

Eleanor smiled with a certain softness—the

ineradicable mother-complex. "You know no one here."

He leaned forward, and nodded vigorously.

"Yes. Lots. But I've spent my off hours trying to avoid them. I can imagine Reg Tyson's horror if he caught me going to work. He'd fly screaming to the nearest Club, and presently it would be all over that Raleigh was doing something queer again, and I'd be dragged to dinners and to see babies and exhibited as a freak." His voice dropped to a more serious key. "They're fine chaps—most of them. We seemed to have had a financially minded class in college. They've all gone into the bond business or banking—at least all of 'em out here. They'd never for a minute understand what I was doing."

Eleanor looked at him curiously, and indicated the cake tray. Raleigh seized it with delight. "Brownies!" he exclaimed. "Who told you that I liked them better than anything in the world?"

"Not Pat Culhane, certainly."

Raleigh roared suddenly, and demolished a brownie. "I'll bet not! What *did* he tell you? I fancy he thinks me quite mad."

"Yes, I think he does, in a harmless and interesting sort of way. You see, it came about this way. I'm doing some work through Mr. Parker of the Welfare Dept., and asked Pat if his wife wouldn't help with the girls' sewing class. Then he asked me if I wanted any singing taught. 'Oh,' he said, 'one of my new press hands has a bunch of quartets, they're tellin' me. Purty soon I spect we won't be able to

hear the noon whistle fur the warblin,' and we'll have the tractors, scatterin' canary seed 'stead of billets.' "

Raleigh joined her laugh. "You don't think he minds?" he queried a little anxiously.

"Mercy no—he's vastly diverted. Naturally he doesn't understand."

"I'll get him down to a rehearsal some night" said Raleigh. She was looking at him curiously. He caught it.

"You mean you don't understand either?"

"Perhaps. I'm awfully interested. It's wonderfully clever of you to go right in and work with the men. No amount of settlement work will give you the same contact."

It was Raleigh's turn to stare. Then he laughed. "But my dear Miss Grayson, I'm not being all noble, and playing the industrial Cinderella. Not for one minute. I'm making my living."

She stared, too, at that, then laughed lightly. It was for an instant embarrassing. "But your music"—she protested.

He nodded, and ostentatiously waved his right hand to conceal the fact that his left was sneaking its fifth brownie. "Yes, of course. You see, I found that I wasn't breaking even down in New York, in spite of occasional publicity jobs and orchestrating things and such. And my digestion was being ruined by studio teas, and my point of view clogged by studio atmosphere. It's a dangerously subtle thing. People come in. They talk and

talk and talk—mostly about Life and Art and Love, free and otherwise, and one feels very grand and lofty. You remember the song of the Banderlog. 'Now we're going to—never mind! Brother, thy tail hangs down behind.' "

She knew her Kipling and her eyes twinkled.

"Well, it was just like that exactly. 'Now we're going to'—and never did—not even to having the piano tuned or ordering more wood in time to keep us from freezing. All talk and no work. And it was rather Art—y, too. I felt that if I saw one more batik smock I'd have to don a flannel shirt and lumberman's boots and take to chewing tobacco. I began to fear I'd sprout pre-Raphaelite blossoms—tube-roses — if I didn't do something. So I — I simply came out here—"

"To your Uncle David" she finished triumphantly.

"I hope you haven't told anyone that" he said gravely.

"Not a soul. I wormed it out of David the other night, and once I had, he told me reams; he's inordinately proud of the way you're doing."

Raleigh gasped. "He *is?* It's the first time on record he's had the remotest use for me, then."

"He's never understood you. He confessed to me that he thought he had misjudged you utterly. If you know David, you'd know how much that admission meant."

Raleigh laughed.

"It seems funny to hear you telling me 'if I knew' my own uncle. But it's perfectly true. I've only seen

him five times in my life, and always wanted to love him and never could. I think now I might."

Eleanor was very earnest. "He's one of the finest people I know. He worked so hard he perilously near forgot how to play." A tendril of a smile played around her mouth for a moment. "Since my debut I've been teaching him to a little." She thrust the cake tray at him persuasively. "Now do tell me about the singing classes. I'm terribly interested."

"Oh—it's really nothing. I ran onto a boy my first day with a fine voice—chap named McGill——"

He stopped, for she had suddenly leaned forward.

"McGill—what does he look like?" Then, as if to relieve the abruptness of it—"I met a man of that name in France. I took care of him in the hospital for a while. How curious if it should be the same one! What does he look like?"

"Big chap—heavily built—very alive blue eyes—very straight eyebrows—plume of dark, mousy-colored hair."

She shook her head, with disappointment, he thought.

"It's not the same. It was a little absurd to think . . . . . the name's common enough." She seemed to Raleigh's quick intuitive sense a little irritated with herself. "Go on, please. I chatter like a magpie on a pole."

"Well, McGill and I were talking about singing, and two lads at the table—it was at lunch—joined in, and presently we had a quartet that got together at noon, and sang. The men used to come round

and listen, and liked it. Particularly the foreigners, of course. One day some of them started up an old Slovanian folk song. You can't imagine; those dirty, dingy looking men, finishing garlic sandwiches, with a *mise-en-scene* of punch presses and cinders and grease, and singing this beautiful old thing. We'd just finished *'I'm Sorry Dear'* in a way to draw tears from a shear-blade. Then this. It was like finding a Leonardo da Vinci in a comic supplement. I nearly fell on their dirty necks, bless 'em."

She was watching his lighted face with curious, appreciative eyes.

"So you scented competition and absorbed them" she interjected. "And I suppose it grew from that."

"Exactly. I'm having a real course in folk music —some of the things they bring use old modes that I know of but never hear in use."

Her brow wrinkled. "Modes?"

"Ancient themes built on scales of music much older than ours. They are older than the pyramids. They were connected with incantation and astrology, with an old and vanished civilization that we can only guess at. They have tremendous power when properly used." He hesitated: she'd think he was queer if he kept on——

"And of course the men love it."

He returned to the men with slight disappointment. "Oh yes." Modes evidently interested Miss Grayson only insofar as they graced her trim body. "They come to the Y.M.C.A. and we rehearse in the——"

She caught the dismay flooding his face.

"Why what's the matter?"

He smiled ruefully, "I guess that's all over now," he said slowly. He thought for a moment—she waited. Then he looked at her gravely.

"You see, I've been living at the Y. and using the auditorium for rehearsals. Today comes this." He reached in his pocket and handed her the letter from Stokes.

She raised perplexed eyes. "What——"

Raleigh dramatized the Bible class in a few sentences. She nodded, anger darkening her eyes for a moment. "Not typical, but not too rare, I fear," she murmured, bending again to the letter.

At the end, Raleigh saw her pale, and she gasped, the without warning doubled over the letter with peals of laughter. Raleigh joined. She shook her head at him, through tears of mirth.

"But you don't know—you don't know the half of it." She read aloud in a laughter-broken voice, "'. . . . detrimental to the spirit which by precept and *example* we seek to foster.'" She exploded again, then looked at him, weak and red-eyed. "Do excuse me, but—but this is rarer than much fine gold, yea sweeter too than the honey in the honey comb." She stopped a moment, thinking. Then her eyes danced, and she stood up.

"Are you game for something?"

"Of course." Utterly puzzled, he nodded.

"All right. Do you know Stokes?"

"Never saw him."

"I do. I'm asking him here to tea."

Raleigh protested. "Really, you mustn't——"

She had vanished from the room. In a moment she returned, her eyes shining with unholy delight.

"He's coming" she announced.

Raleigh was genuinely annoyed. "Really, Miss Grayson, I suppose this is very good of you, but——"

"It is. Very. Moreover, it is going to be the most saccharine revenge ever granted. I had some contact with Reginald Stokes in the war. Now please don't ask questions. Just act as if you had never gotten that letter. Come and play to me. Did you bring the score of *Pelleas?*"

He fell into her mood, and asked no more questions.

"No, but I know most of it." They sauntered to the piano, and while Raleigh smoked "after-tea cigarettes" as he called them, talked of opera and singers and Beyreuth that she had seen and he hadn't, and of Ravel, whom he knew well. They flew from place to person, and Raleigh emptied himself of his desire to talk about the things he loved. The fire dropped together, and the gloom outside turned from dark grey to black. Finally he sat at the piano.

She settled into a chair where she could watch, and Raleigh struck the first six notes that are the flute-call of the Faune, and lead like irregular silver stepping stones, into the luminous shadows and haunted glades of Debussy's exquisite prelude. As usual, all else fell from him like garments, and he

floated out into the transparent iridescence of the music.

When he finished—"That's so lovely" came appreciatively from Eleanor, but he instantly sensed a lack of fundamental "feeling-with," and swift disappointment fell like a light shadow over the mood of the music. But Eleanor was going on, her light, beautifully modulated voice softened.

"Don't you always think of fairy horns muted for the death of the court jester, in those five last chords?"

Raleigh nodded. That was exquisite—perfect intellectual appreciation. Yet—it was the mind that spoke, not the deeper thing, which rarely spoke at all, never in the clever costuming of phrase that she gave.

He felt cheated. He was a supersensitive fool about that sort of thing, he decided an instant later. It was just that he so wanted her to understand . . . "Yes, it's a lovely thing—and that's a fine description," he found himself saying.

She asked him to play the "Gardens Under the Rain," and through the music that followed, music that brought the splash and tinkle of rain—a rather exotic summer rain slanted like a brocade of pearl and moonstone over bending blue bells and myriad-hued flowers, music that trilled with the last few drops falling steadily from shining leaves after the sun had burst apart the clouds, she sat watching him with keen, interested eyes. Almost at the end, came the sound of a distant bell in the house; a door opened and closed.

Then an assured, full voice ploughed determinedly through the delicate final fabric of the music, like a bull through a cobweb, with "Ah, Miss Grayson, this is indeed a pleasure."

Raleigh jumped, and swung from the piano. Eleanor went swiftly forward. She introduced them. Evidently the name meant nothing to Stokes at the moment, and candle-light throws a strange glamour over even intimately familiar faces. Stokes beamed on him.

"Don't let me interrupt your music, Mr. Raleigh. What a talent it is, to be sure. I suppose that it is a hobby with you."

Raleigh lit a cigarette and answered very quietly. "Yes, a hobby."

"Ah yes. Everyone should have a hobby, quite right, quite right. Very interesting, I'm sure."

Eleanor had again become the center decoration of the tip-table. She smiled sweetly at Stokes, who pulled a chair close beside her, talking pompously with a fatuous undercurrent of flattery. Raleigh studied him. He was very smooth. His greyed, dark hair lay sleek from his forehead, his clothes fitted him sleekly; his face held the smooth linelessness of the man of forty who has been concerned with small things. Raleigh reluctantly admitted it was a handsome face. The grey eyes were clear enough. Yet he felt a soft-padded feline quality, without enough force to make that quality either dangerous or interesting.

Eleanor was speaking.

"I've seen nothing of you since the days of the War Camp Community. How you helped us, when we all fell into work like kittens into a tub, and floundered, and scratched each other a little."

He held up a deprecating hand. "I merely did what I could."

She offered the cake tray. "I don't think I've really seen you at all," she murmured in a tone subtly regretful, "until this morning," she added slowly.

Something in the tone caused Raleigh to look up suddenly at her. Mr. Stokes' bland smile dissolved under some mental chemistry of his own, and he flushed very quickly. "This morning?" he asked.

"Yes—I just caught a glimpse of you down town."

"Oh" the relief was too evident. Raleigh began to burn with curiosity.

"Strange you haven't met Mr. Raleigh before," went on Eleanor. "But I suppose there are so many young men living there that you never see half of them."

Stokes put down his cup and stared at Raleigh.

"Are you living at the Y?"

Eleanor cut in. "Yes indeed, and he's doing some interesting work there. Surely you must have heard of his chorus of men from the Hydraulic?"

Stokes went scarlet, and spluttered in his moustache.

"Oh—er—a—yes, of course. I didn't place you as the Mr. Raleigh who,—er a, yes to be sure" he stopped, and they saw him all but ask whether

Raleigh had gotten the letter dismissing him from the building. Eleanor turned to Raleigh gravely.

"Are you taking any part in the religious activities of the Y, Mr. Raleigh?" she asked. Raleigh for a moment was deceived by her gravity. Then he caught her eye. He spoke as if they were alone.

"I fear my taste in religion is too naive or too sophisticated; I am not sure which. Direct spiritual expression through nature makes one a pagan and intellectual criticism an atheist, I find. One is forced into the middle ground of taking one's spiritual information second hand, like a book so scribbled with some one's annotations that the original text is hid." He smiled at Mr. Stokes, who struggled for restraint. Eleanor was gazing into the fire with her chin in her hands, and spoke softly, but with a distinctness that drew both men's attention at once.

"Yes"—she murmured, "that is quite so. Yet Madame Lestrange doesn't mind the annotations. She finds them helpful."

Raleigh followed up promptly. At mention of the name Stokes had jerked round, and was staring at her.

"Who is Madame Lestrange?" asked Raleigh.

"The woman who does my hair—a devout Catholic." Suddenly she turned to the men, as if rousing from a deep revery.

"Oh—I must tell you the funniest thing that happened there this morning. I was having a shampoo, in the inner room. The outer one is a manicure parlor, I might say. All of a sudden a loud voice

of feminine indignation began shouting 'You get right out of here—you ain't no gentleman!' Naturally I made one leap to the curtain and looked. There was Corrinne Friggs, one of the manicure girls, standing with the expression of a debauched baby, and the man she'd been manicuring was flying out of the door like one pursued." She laughed silverly. Raleigh, gazing at Stokes, saw a great light. He roared.

"I suppose he was some fresh young male flapper who'd been toying with the golden locks?"

"Oh, not at all. He was quite middle-aged, and looked painfully respectable. Then Corinne told her friend in a voice that would fill the Hippodrome that he had been squeezing her knee under the table."

"A quaint fancy" laughed Raleigh. "But then, what you might expect from middle-age respectability. It's an age that lacks inventiveness, I find. I think Mr. Stokes wants some tea, Miss Grayson."

"Oh, I'm so sorry—I was interested in my story. Can't I give you some?"

That gentleman's countenance was mottled like an Easter egg. He sat as if turned to stone for a moment, then projected himself from his chair in a manner strangely suggestive of lifting by bootstraps.

"No—sorry—didn't know—didn't really know it was so late—I'm afraid that I must go, at once." His hands ran up and down the buttons of his coat like a clarinetist playing scales.

Eleanor rose. "Must you? I'm sorry. I wanted to talk to you about some settlement work,

but another time—if you're in a hurry now. You must hear one of Mr. Raleigh's rehearsals. You have them three times a week, don't you?"

"Yes." Raleigh hardly dared to speak. He extended a hand to Mr. Stokes, who clung to it with a dank finger for a moment. "You must come down when we get a little further on with the work. It ought to be interesting in another week—if nothing interferes with the rehearsals."

"I'm sure nothing will" said Eleanor. "She gave the perspiring Stokes her hand. "Good-bye—I'm so glad to have seen you—*again.*"

With a bow and a few mumbled words, he fled, the assurance that had floated him into the room like an august balloon trailing round him like punctured shreds.

They waited without moving till the outside door had banged. Then they looked at each other. With a whoop Raleigh vaulted an ottoman and seized both Eleanor's hands.

"You marvellous person!" he cried.

CHAPTER X

THE FORBIDDEN MODE

RALEIGH bent above his desk, a bathrobe flung hastily round him and a small stream of water trickling from one elbow. He had been seized with a theme in the showers, and had fled dripping to jot it down. It had come suddenly and completely, and he recognized it at once as the "shop" theme for which he had been hunting. In it the rhythm of the three big presses beat like soft gigantic hammers. He scribbled busily, then hummed what he had written. Then his brow wrinkled with surprise, and he began rummaging through manuscripts.

He drew forth a big envelope with an Indian stamp on it, and pulled out two single sheets of manuscript paper. One of them he compared to the theme he had written, and he whistled.

"Funny" he muttered to himself; "It's almost the same. I must have struck pretty close." He looked again at the paper he had drawn from the envelope. At the top of it was written in fine small letters: "Hymn to Apollo—Hyperdorian Mode—about 450 B.C." Underneath, in smaller letters still "The esoteric connotation is that of *loyalty.*"

He picked up the other sheet, and looked at it curiously, with an expression very akin to dread. The top of it was covered with the same fine writing. He read it with the unbroken fascination it always held for him . . . . . "It is one of the oldest expressions of evocative music and very rare, because it was, and in all esoteric cults is still, strictly forbidden. This led to its banishment from written music; it still obtained, however, as part of the Wisdom Music handed down verbally from priest to priest. Hints of it are found in Phœnician, Egyptian and Maian chants, pointing to a common source—perhaps in Atlantis. This specimen is from Thibet, and, I am told, is used by the outcast cult there with terrifying results. Do not, I beg of you, employ it lightly, for such things are not for the ears of the layman, and to a sensitive mind, under the right conditions (of which only vague legends remain) *it might produce death.* I can only guess at the forces it liberated, when used properly, but I know they were gigantic. So be careful how you give it sound."

Raleigh looked at the music and heard it mentally. It had an iterative rhythm, that made him think of the spiral coiling of a cobra.

There came a gentle knock at his door, but he was too absorbed to notice it, or to see that the door opened timidly, and a figure stood in the room. He was going through the forbidden mode again. The temptation to hear it actually, in physical sound, was too great, and, with a laugh at himself for his

own superstition, but with none the less a cold tingling of the spine, he began to sing it. Doubtless his mind was stirred to expect anything, but it seemed to him that the air grew suddenly colder, and that with the coiling rhythm of the chant, boomed out in his big voice, came a spiral twisting of invisible forces in the air about him. . . . He was certainly cold. He finished it defiantly, loudly, then his eyes lifted from the manuscript, and he sprang to his feet. Smetana was standing in the door, looking at him in amazement, and with a strange smile.

"Great Scott!" cried Raleigh. Then he laughed, and dropped back into his chair. "You startled me" he confessed. "Didn't hear you come in at all." He remembered him by that time as the boy he had befriended in the gym. "Sit down—there on the bed." Smetana was poised as if for instant, scared flight, his eyes growing larger and larger as he looked at Raleigh. He seemed to expect the big bare figure to turn to rend him. He sat down timidly on the very edge of the bed.

Raleigh put back the manuscripts in the envelope, and threw a curious glance at Smetana. Apparently the singing had had no effect on him—Raleigh laughed heartily at himself, a little shame-faced over his mood of credulousness. And yet——

He turned to Smetana, rubbing his head violently with a towel, and talking jerkily through it. "How have you been? I don't think I've seen you since that day in the gym. Everything going all right?"

Smetana smiled a little. "Yes, pretty good. I got better job now. I run de magnet crane—you know—" he gestured in a way that two months before Raleigh would have interpreted as the playing of an invisible harp, but which he knew perfectly as the swing of the big crane with its pendant magnets. This crane had always fascinated him; from a huge horizontal arm hung three masses of iron like flattened, gigantic beehives, side by side, as ornaments might hang from a lady's bar pin. In action the magnets bumped gently upon girders or bars. Then they mysteriously came to life, and clapped to the iron like the suckers of an octopus, to sail swiftly off with sometimes an uncouth kite-tail of magnetized pieces dangling.

Raleigh looked at Smetana's thin, frail hands, and thought of the Titan they commanded all day.

"Mighty responsible job—I'm sure I should push the wrong things, and have a cascade of girders trickling down someone's neck. Do you understand electricity?"

"Oh yes—I study in night school here. That why I live here." He looked round Raleigh's room wonderingly. "You have so beautiful things," he observed wistfully. Like any impulse to beauty, it warmed Raleigh.

"You must come down often. I'm over at the Hydraulic too, you know."

Smetana nodded. "Meester McGill, he say you want me sing with you."

"Are *you* the one he meant—with the tenor voice?

That's fine. I'll come and plead nightly till you promise to join us——"

He stopped suddenly, remembering McGill's words —"He's the cousin of that guy that was killed the first day you come."

He crossed quietly to him. "I—tell me how your cousin is, the sister of the man who"—he got no further, for Smetana had half started up, his hands had clenched, and his face had gone suddenly grey. Raleigh glanced into his eyes in amazement—they fairly smoked. He awkwardly rushed on.

"I—um—so sorry—so little I could do—I was there, you know, and——"

Smetana's hands shot out to him.

"Eet was *you*—so good—to heem—I not know who"—he choked, and his thin fingers dug into Raleigh's arm.

Raleigh nodded, agitated by the burst of emotion. Suddenly the boy bent, and to Raleigh's intense embarrassment, kissed his hand violently. Then he lifted a torn white face. He was almost incoherent. Raleigh, appalled by the torrent of emotion, gaped speechless. The boy suddenly hid his face and sobbed. Raleigh patted him gently.

"There—boy—don't do that—I know it's frightfully hard—there laddie." His own ready sympathy was getting the better of him.

Suddenly Smetana raised his head and looked at Raleigh with eyes glowing dully, but a face vacant of every vestige of feeling; a slate sponged out.

"I *lofed* him" he whispered in an even tone. "He

was the only one—my brudders die—my mudder die—he *evert'ing"* he stopped for a moment, then looked directly at Raleigh.. He seemed to struggle with a large but vague thought.

"You—good" he said slowly, "but They bad; They let him be kill—they want him keel"—again Raleigh seemed to see something stir back of the huge eyes.

"Who are They?" he said hastily, fearing another burst of hysteria, and conscious of a coldness as he looked into the boy's strange eyes.

Smetana waved his hands. Words served him ill. "De Hydraulic de bosses—dose press——"

Raleigh smiled and slapped his shoulder gently. "Oh come now, really" he said kindly. "It was an accident—a terrible accident—you mustn't blame them. Surely you don't think the 'bosses'——"

Smetana stopped him. "That press" he said very low "eet is not work right. My cousin, he tell me. De switch, he not cut off good. He report it . . . eet is not fix."

Raleigh was silent, fearing he spoke the truth, looking at him with new eyes for his suffering.

A tremendous thump on the door startled them both, and without more ado McGill roared in, his eyes and cheeks glowing with the outer cold.

"Hello, Dan" he paused at sight of Smetana. "Why I'll be damned—you found him, huh?"

From the depths of his closet Raleigh winked violently at McGill.

"We're going to take Smetana with us to the

show" he said. "You'll come, won't you?" Coming once more into the boy's vision.

Smetana's face broke into a smile like sudden sunshine.

"Oh yes—I come—you sure you want me?" with a wistfulness that caught too the blithe McGill.

"Course we want you" he shouted "Run an' get your coat."

Raleigh explained. "He's terribly cut up about it, and I want to keep an eye on him," he finished. McGill nodded, and Smetana rushed back, having donned a violent magenta tie and a dark overcoat. Raleigh was bubbling of his new theme to McGill. "I'll use it for an original tune. Parker said he'd like some original music, you remember."

At the desk he snatched the one envelope the clerk gave him. It bore the red triangle of the Y.M.C.A.

"Excuse me a minute" he said, and read eagerly.

"Dear Mr. Raleigh" ran the letter. "In view of the fine work you are doing with the men of your place of work in music, and the value the auditorium must be for that work, we have reconsidered the question of your leaving the building, and will be glad to have you with us.

"Most sincerely
"R. A. STOKES, Gen. Sec'y."

Raleigh's shout of laughter caused the others to turn inquiring faces, and Freddy was jocose.

"Love you, does she?" he grinned.

"Adores me, if one judges by what she's done. No—it's really something rare. Remember the row and my going to be kicked out of here I told you about? Well, I'm not. It's all set."

"How did you pull it?"

"A gentleman had his fingers manicured." And this was all they could elicit.

Late that evening they sent a happy and radiant Smetana home to the Y.M.C.A., glowing in the warmth of the two men's easy kindness, and the more tactile comfort of mountainous food in which they had all indulged after the movie.

But before he slept, the dark cloud of pain swept back upon him, and the spinning of his mind came clearly to him again, its slow spinning round a focus it could not find. Vague shapes, machines with cruel faces, floated round him, circling faster and faster in his mind. Finally he fell asleep and dreamed that a spinning head had attached itself to the magnet-crane. It whirled and whinced, and began spinning up the crane-arm to him. It became luminous with the heat of its own motion—he felt it hot on his face. He awoke with a scream, in a blaze of winter sunshine falling across his bed. But the face remained. It was the face of David Harde.

CHAPTER XI

MORE FAMILY PORTRAITS

IT was past midnight when McGill and Raleigh walked arm in arm up 147th Street, singing softly, their steps crunching on the frozen sidewalk. McGill turned in, drew a key from his pocket, opened the door, and pulled Raleigh into darkness. Warmth, a lingering odor of tobacco, flowers somewhere, an integrity of knitted life, an atmosphere complete, rushed to him.

"Snff, snff,—snff" went Raleigh.

"Hey—" McGill's voice was a hoarse whisper, "What's the matter? Smell smoke or somethin'?" He was fumbling for the light-switch.

"No—I smell the breath of home"—a speech which Freddy, leading the way into an upper hall he had flashed into light, accepted as one of Raleigh's incomprehensibles.

Raleigh dreamed vividly of strange things in a way to delight the soul of Freudian. Goldenhaired manicurists chased middle-aged gentlemen up a long incline, with a grand piano at the top, and suddenly vanished. Raleigh reached the piano to find Eleanor Grayson and Smetana looking with horror into the

raised top of it. Raleigh also looked, and saw the body of the crushed workman, stark and staring of eye. He found himself playing—the workman's body muffled the strings. He thought Smetana's "They" appeared, huge squamous shapes that floated round like a crowd of jelly-fish—somehow the visual representation of a corporation—a multiple expression of a unity. Raleigh played the "shop" theme that had come to him that day, and They vanished. The dead man dissolved, and streamed in dark ribbons out of the piano, whisked humming after them, and vanished, and suddenly the girl who had been with him at the accident was sitting a-top the piano. She tickled his nose with a long feather . . . he awoke to find McGill's laughing face above him, and in his hand a lathered shaving brush with which he had been slyly dabbing Raleigh's nose.

He sat up wildly. "Good Lord" he gasped. "I've had the maddest dream."

"I'll say you have" laughed Fred. "You woke me up hollerin' clear in my room. Breakfast is about ready."

Raleigh dressed quickly, his eye running over the room, papered in light pink with small yellow flowers in it. On one side hung two or three pennants, on another smoke chromos. Above a desk a curious piperack made of elk-horns, where hung four dusty pipes. Raleigh wandered to the desk—he snatched a picture from it, and stared. The inadequate photography and stiff pose could not destroy the beauty of the face. Raleigh shouted.

"Freddy" he roared, in a tone to bring McGill half-shorn from the bathroom. He held up the picture. *"Who* is this?"

McGill looked at the picture. His eyes twinkled above the lather. "Oh, that's a little friend of mine. You'll meet her soon."

"But I have, you great goose! The day of the accident. When Smetana's cousin was killed. She was the girl I told you about!"

McGill chuckled. "Well, you'll meet her again. What yuh think of her?"

"An absolute dear—why, I thought about her even in the middle of that awful thing. Like a fool, I never even found out her name. What luck! Do tell me all about her. Does she live near?"

Freddy disappeared into the bathroom. "Tell you after breakfast" he mumbled through soap lather. He hastened his shaving with unheard of zeal for Sunday morning, so that by the time Raleigh was dressed he had long since clattered down to the kitchen. To Raleigh's nostrils rose the incense of those twin Lares and Penates of the breakfast table —coffee and bacon.

When he descended, glowing and immaculate, he found a thickset young man with powerful shoulders and light hair fitting his head like a cap, seated in a froth of Sunday papers, his slippered feet comfortably planted on the polished railing of a large round stove. His open shirt revealed a muscular white throat. At sight of Raleigh he rose quickly and smiled. He had very grave gray eyes, and a square,

powerful face. He looked at Raleigh a little uncertainly. Raleigh held out his hand easily.

"I don't know which one it is" he said pleasantly, "Bill or Bob or Con—I'm Raleigh."

The other gripped his hand. "I'm Bob" he said quietly. "Fred's talked a lot about you. Sit down; Fred's in the kitchen—he'll be in directly." He drew up a chair; Raleigh did as bidden. This was the next oldest brother, then, with the very good position at the White Motors, and the passion for reading books on all things mechanic, and the light-heavyweight boxing champion of the shops. Raleigh felt his able, grave presence, and thought of the militant guildsmen of mediæval Bruges; he felt they must have exhibited the same unromantic, not unattractive power. Raleigh liked him, but felt subdued in some curious way. Here was a person before whom he could not possibly frivol, he thought.

All this flitted through Raleigh's mind with the rapidity of unregistered intuition as he settled into a chair, his back to the adjoining dining room. He fell industriously to making conversation.

"Fred told me you pulled down the White boxing championship last week," he said, looking at the other with the admiration of every artist for physical achievement. "That's splendid—I'd much rather do that than write a symphony."

Bob showed signs of embarrassment piercing his gravity. He stirred the papers with one foot. "Oh, it doesn't amount to much" he muttered. Then he looked at someone over Raleigh's head, and smiled

with a tenderness that changed his whole face. Raleigh turned and saw Fred, his face wreathed with merriment.

"Here's somebody you wanted to meet" he said, and reached behind him, where someone stood, concealed by his big body.

There emerged the girl of the accident.

She faced Raleigh, in the full light, and smiled eagerly, clearly not recognizing him. She held out a hand.

"I'm mighty glad to see you, Mr. Raleigh" came the rich remembered contralto. "Freddy's talked so much—"

Then she stopped, and her face flushed. "Why" she cried "You're the one who—" she stared for a moment then whirled on Fred. "He's the one at the accident," she cried.

Fred chuckled. "Course he is. I was a nut not to know it when you told me 'bout him. When he saw your picture I knew."

Raleigh gave a little crow of delight. "Fancy finding you *here!*" he carolled joyously. "Isn't it luck. I *am* glad. Did you know I was the chap you'd seen at the accident?"

Peggy was gazing at him out of suddenly shy eyes, and smiling with the laughter lines he so remembered. No wonder McGill had seemed familiar to him. She looked down, suddenly pink.

"I—I hoped you were. Seemed like it might be you."

This was unreasonably pleasant to him. She had

seated herself on a low stool. He pulled a chair beside her.

"But why didn't you ask Fred to ask me—he never mentioned it at all."

Peggy rose to the sound of clattering dishes from the kitchen. Her voice, with its rapid rise and fall of words like a wave rolling smoothly over rocks, softening and uniting them in liquid curves, came over her shoulder as she retreated kitchenward.

"Because I was afraid you might not be, and I wanted you to awfully." She vanished. Raleigh turned on Fred and seized his shoulders.

"You shameless bandit" he cried. "Fancy concealing a sister like that—"

"Conceal yer hat" retorted Fred grinning. "I've been trying to get you out here for a month."

"You'll be a year trying to get me away" Raleigh shot back, with a cosmic smile that included earth and sea and sky.

"I hope so" came in a resounding, pleasant voice from behind him, and he turned to see a big woman, tall and powerful, coming to him from the kitchen. Her light hair was straight, and swept back from a square forehead, and she gave Raleigh a fine handclasp like a man's.

"I'm very glad you could be coming out to us" she went on, with the faintest of Scotch burrs in her r's. Her voice touched the same depths as Peggy's, but by virtue of its steadiness and lack of the girl's curling intonation, seemed deeper still. Raleigh had a swift impression, of a heroic figure—

the high forehead, the strong face, with wide, kind mouth, and the strength of the body—it was a creature who, in another age, might have seized the Valsung sword, and swung off in thunderous flight across the sky, to the clanging lightnings of the gods.

Instead—"Do you like buckwheat cakes?" she smiled at him. Raleigh blinked and tumbled to earth. "Yes indeed" he answered mechanically, feeling a little as if the Niké of Samothrace had proffered him a gumdrop. Mrs. McGill turned again to the kitchen. "Well—'scuse me a minute—I'm makin' 'em now."

"Oh, can't I come?" said Raleigh, suddenly the small boy. "I want to. I haven't seen them get crisp brown bubbly edges for years. I really won't break off the crisp parts and eat 'em first."

This swift change of mood Freddy had by now accepted—it plainly puzzled the others.

"Why of course—come along" cried Mrs. McGill good-naturedly. "That is, if you don't mind the looks of this kitchen—the laddies all pile in on Sunday morning, and there's no getting them out at all."

"Oh, I'm sure it can't compare to my studio. I used to have the fire department come and throw me rope ladders to get out of the debris. I was really too . . ." he ducked his tall head into the kitchen and vanished.

Fred laughed at the others. "That's him" he chuckled. "Now he'll ask Ma all about it, and I'll find him fryin' bucks on a hot billet about Monday."

He turned to Peggy. "Like him?" he asked in an undertone.

Peggy, thus addressed, shot him a sudden strange look then turned away toward the stairs. "Yes" she said in an unreadable voice "he's very nice."

Her "very" curled up at the end and burred like her mother's—a sign with Peggy which Fred, with the unconsciousness of most brothers, had never learned. The strange depth of her sudden look too had missed him.

Bob it did not miss. His eyes turned grave as iron, and over his face came the curious tender softening that had so surprised Raleigh. He sat down slowly, with the relaxed grace of the athlete, and beckoned to Freddy with his head. Freddy, out of the unconscious boyhood obedience to an older brother, came at once.

Bob looked at him steadily, and his lips barely moved.

"Is this fellow straight?"

Fred looked as if his brother had struck him in the face. For a moment he was speechless. "What the hell do you mean?" he said at last.

Bob met his amazed stare steadily. "I know you like him, and all that, an' he's good-looking—most too good-looking to suit me—but is he straight—does he run around?"

Fred's face had tightened, and he put a heavy hand on his brother's arm. His voice was hard and rough.

"Say—lay offn't that, will you? I *know* Dan.

They don't make 'em any cleaner than that kid. Why, one night we was comin' home from a show, and a couple 'o cuties—good-lookin' they was, too, comes along. We'd had a drink or two, down't Allen's an' I was feelin' pretty manly. They give us the glad eye, an' I hauls on Raleigh's arm and we all stop. He'd been talking me blue about some old music he's keen on, and for a minute I don't think he sees 'em at all. Then he looks fussed to death. One of 'em fasten's onto him, and t'other onto me. He reaches down, real easy, an' unhooks her arm.

" 'I'm afraid you've picked the wrong rose-bud' he says, an' cold—say, you could have froze ice-cream on his voice! Then he laughs all of a sudden, and puts one finger on her cheek, quick, and rubs it, looks at it, then bows like a Frog general given the Craw de Gurr. He laughs again.

" 'No, my child,' he says, 'I'm not goin' out for exterior decoration this season,' an' pulls me along. I—come. I was all excited and talked and talked. I was a little sore, an' said I didn't see nuthin' wrong with givin' 'em a good time. He faces round at that an' says 'course it's not wrong—it's much worse than that—it's damn poor taste. It's like drinkin' out of a gutter.' "

Voices from the kitchen suddenly made themselves audible. "Oh, let me carry them," and "Don't burn yourself—that plate's been where it's hot."

Fred sunk his voice to a whisper and stared at

his brother. "What's the matter with you, wantin' to know all Dan's past? You ain't no little snow-drift, as I ever noticed."

Bob flushed a little and his grey eyes dropped. "Oh, I just wondered," he muttered.

"Never were there so many cakes in the world" cried Raleigh, suddenly prancing in with a steaming plate. Peggy, entering at the same time, flew to him with authoritative hands. They all sat down. Two younger brothers appeared from the back yard, and were introduced, ducking sleeked heads and grinning.

"Where's pa?" asked Fred, dumping three deck cakes on Raleigh's plate.

"Gone down to talk to Mr. Gardner. He had breakfast an hour ago," returned Mrs. McGill, seated like a statue of Justice behind a huge coffe-pot.

Accustomed as he was to the matutinal tea and toast, Raleigh ate himself into a coma. The table groaned with cakes, and crisp bacon, and crisp sausage, fat blurbs of fresh butter. Everyone talked about the great fall of snow during the night, Raleigh looked across at Peggy through the smoke of the boys' cigarettes, and smiled.

"Let's you and Fred and me go for a walk" he said. "That is, if I'm able to leave the table without the help of a crane."

"We're all goin' out coasting" returned Peggy. "Bill—that's my oldest brother—he's comin' with the Ford, and Claire and Angus fixed the bobsled. Bill'll pull us out to the Holburn hills, about eight

miles out. There's fine skating on the pond, and the coasting is slick."

Raleigh smiled to himself to hear the boyish phrases on her lips. No wonder, he told himself, with a brigade of brothers.

The table broke up, and after changing into an old sweater and trousers of Fred's, he sought Mrs. McGill, and found her in the kitchen.

"You don't know how nice it is to be out here," he said, smiling at her.

Mrs. McGill's capable hands were straightening, ordering, "cleaning up." She looked up at Raleigh in genuine pleased surprise.

"That's mighty nice of you to say that," she returned, adding a gleaming pot to the row back of the stove. "Freddy's talked about you lots. He seems to think you're about right." Her deep, strong voice vibrated among the pots and kettles.

"He's saved my life" declared Raleigh. "I'd have died of loneliness, at first, if it hadn't been for him. And—you really don't know how I love being out here" he added between shyness and impulse. "You see, I haven't had any home, really, for about six years. You see, dad died, when I was just a youngster, and I lost mother just before I went to college."

Mrs. McGill had stopped cleaning up, a half wiped dish motionless in her hand.

"Didn't you have anybody else?" she asked, the big voice quieter.

"Only Uncle Da—only a bachelor uncle who didn't—who lived in another part of the country,

and had never thought much of me. Oh, he wasn't unkind" he added hastily, "just awfully busy, and I always took care of myself, anyhow."

Bachelor studios were outside Mrs. McGill's experience.

"But where did ye live, laddie?" Her voice had taken on a deeper coloring of Scotch that only unwonted feeling gave it.

"Oh, I got right into the army from college. Then I lived about—in funny little studios with chaps I knew. It was rather fun, too; we used to cook all sorts of messes, but somehow they always tasted of grease-paint or linseed oil, never like *home*. That's why I love this so." He spoke lightly.

Mrs. McGill stepped to him swiftly, and her big hands were gentle as they touched his coat.

"Ye need never lack a home while I'm standing, laddie" she said brusquely. Raleigh looked up to see the strong face shining gently. He astonished her with a quick smile of delight.

"Bless your heart!" he cried softly, and hurried out.

CHAPTER XII

PREJUDICE—AND SKIIS

THEY had swung out into the open country, and the little Ford panted up the Holburn Hills with the long bobsled in its wake. Peggy had sandwiched herself between Fred, who steered in front, and Raleigh. Then came Bob, and the two younger boys. With shouts of laughter they had fled through the city, leaving stares from the church-going, and howls of envy from one sturdy youngster being dragged by uncompromising maturity to devotions.

"Fine-looking bunch" one man had commented, gazing after them. "Did you see that girl—gad, I never saw such color."

His wife had sniffed.

The Ford stopped beside a little lake, lying like a frosted mirror on its plateau. Since leaving the city they had been gradually rising, and the country spread before them, white and lovely. The lake was dotted with a few black figures, and the whistling wind of the early morning had blown it fairly clean.

"I've got some skates for yuh, Dan" said Fred, as they tumbled from the bob and stretched cramped legs.

"Thanks, old thing, I don't skate. Rotten ankles, you know. You people go ahead—I'll start a track with the sled."

"Don't you skate at all?" asked Bob, looking up from lacing on a pair of hockey shoes. Raleigh felt again the critical weighing quality of the man, and knew suddenly that to Bob he was an ornamental person of no great use and questionable trustworthiness—recognized the old distrust of the man of strong common sense for the artist. It always irritated him into doing just the things such people expected of him.

"Oh no, not at all," he returned airily. "My athletics are limited to piano scales—I'm frequently exhausted at the end of the long arpeggio. Occasionally I practice on the organ, too; it gives the legs such development, I find." The others laughed, puzzled. Bob, with lightly veiled contempt. His antagonism came suddenly close to the surface, so that Raleigh tingled to meet it. But he only bowed over his shoes again in silence.

Peggy cast down her skates. "I'm going coasting with Mr. Raleigh" she declared, and threw an exasperated glance at Bob. "Come on." She met Bob's suddenly lifted eyes defiantly, and seized the sled. Raleigh bounded to her side. She began speaking as soon as they were out of earshot.

"You mustn't mind Bob" she said quickly. "He's

really a dear laddie, but awful hard to get at. You're a new kind to him."

"He thinks I'm perfectly useless, and thoroughly superficial. You know he does. It's all right. It doesn't bother me in the least." He slipped a hand under her arm. "You don't think so, do you?" he asked naively.

She looked up frankly. "I think you're a wonder" she said with fine candor. "Of course, you're different from us—you write music, and you've travelled lots, and all that. But you're real, someway."

Raleigh drew a deep breath of relief.

"Peggy" he said earnestly, bending down to her, "All that doesn't matter. I know boys at school that had fine shells—good looks, a delightful way of talking, minds that could unravel yards of information about eighteenth century poetry and the specific gravity of oils and the latest theory of government. Under it was nothing. I knew men later—in the army—that couldn't spell their own names, and yet somehow they—answered—there was something in them, fine, splendid, strong that the others didn't have, a core, an essence . . . I wonder what it is I'm trying to say" he finished rather lamely.

Peggy had never taken her eyes from his face. Now she smiled, and her countenance bore all the wisdom (which is not knowledge) of the ages.

"It's the heart of understanding," she said.

Raleigh stared at her. "*Where* did you get that?" he demanded.

"It's in an old Irish legend that my father often told me," she said. Gently, she added, "He couldn't write his own name till he was a grown man."

They had reached the top of the hill. Raleigh looked down at her. "He didn't need to, if he knew things like that" he replied. A little silence fell between them. It was very still—the white slopes undulated away iridescent and gleaming. Behind and below came faint shouts from the boys, busy with hockey on the lake. Soft clouds evenly covered the sky; they scattered the light into a soft glamour like golden moonlight, making distances deceptive.

Peggy suddenly jerked the sled forward, and Raleigh felt a conscious effort to break the soft spell that was creeping round them. She flung herself on the sled. Raleigh gave a quick push, then hopped on behind her, the guide ropes in his hands. The snow began purling past the sides of the sled, to tinkle into fine dry spray against his face. It was a little too deep and compact for ideal coasting, but as the sled gained momentum the plumes of snow grew and soon they were flying down the hill. The sled rocked. Raleigh's arms slipped round Peggy, sitting up in front of him, and she turned half round, and buried her face against his sweater from the snow. To him they seemed, for a moment, one, and alone, shut off from all else by a soft whirring curtain of sound and a flying mantle of plumy white.

Then the ground flattened, and the sled slowed. They rose laughing, and shaking the snow from them, their faces crimson. Both their caps had

come off, and Pegg'y hair waved wildly round her face. On the long climb back they talked of many things, and Raleigh felt a growing consciousness of intense pleasure in her mere presence. Often his quicker mind went beyond her, quite as often she surprised him with a quaint sageness. He was egocentric enough to sort his emotions carefully—he knew the thing he felt for Peggy had nothing to do with mind whatever—that it lay beyond and below any intellectual currents, sounding a deep note of its own. He felt it as a warm glow, as a delight in little things they agreed upon, in past experience shared, in a delicious tingle of his fingers when they met her flesh. It was like having taken a cocktail of perpetual and cumulative effect.

"Fred's told me about your playing" she said when they were nearing the top of the hill. "We're going over next door after dinner and hear you. We haven't a piano, as I guess you noticed; we thought a Victrola would be more fun for the boys."

"You like music, Fred says."

She did not answer at once. "I don't know whether I like it or not" she answered slowly. "It—I feel like someone was pumping me up inside. It makes me feel—I can't tell you—all chocky and big and like a tree might feel—or a mountain. Sometimes it most makes me afraid."

Raleigh thought of Eleanor Grayson's deft comment on the *L'Apres-Midi d'un Faune*—"Fairy horns, muted for the death of the court jester," and smiled a little.

At the summit they found Bob standing beside a stranger, a tall thin man. Beside him lay a pair of skiis, and he was scraping ice from a ski-pole.

"Tired of skating?" asked Raleigh.

"Wanted to see this stunt" he returned shortly, glancing at the skiis. Raleigh moved the sled forward and Peggy, rather winded, dropped on it, and began doing her hair. The land fell away from the small knoll in three directions; down one side was the track they had made with the sled, another toward which it now pointed, dropped with sudden steepness. The third led gradually back and down to the lake.

Raleigh nodded to the stranger. "It's wonderful snow for you," he said, "a little heavy for the sled. Which way are you going down?"

The man indicated the slope that Raleigh and Peggy had taken. "That's about the best, I guess," he said, walking a little way toward it. Raleigh followed him. "Ever do any skiing?"

"Not in this country" returned Raleigh. "I spent the winter after the Armistice at San Moritz."

The other whistled. "You ought to know how, then. I'll lend you my skiis after a bit for a go, eh?"

"Thanks, I'd love to. Why don't you take off down that steep slope?"

"Not much! That goes to the Holburn quarry, and there's too good a chance of getting to it before you realize in this light. It's a straight drop of 150 feet from this side. You can barely see it—the

snow light's deceptive as the devil." He raised a long arm and pointed. Raleigh after a moment's gazing, was able to make out a dim line across the snow, and to distinguish between the snow before and behind it as divided by considerable space. They turned to the other slope. Raleigh gauged it.

"Well, no trouble about—"

A peal of laughter from Peggy turned him round. Bob had stepped behind her, and given the sled a jerk, so that if flew from under her, and she plumped down into the snow. With a shriek of laughter, she rose and made for him. Raleigh, glancing at him, saw his eyes tender in spite of their laughter, and suddenly realized how this silent, grave young man loved his sister. It explained much to him.

Peggy ran toward him—he whirled, and with a mocking "catch me, sis," flung himself full length on the sled. The momentum carried it over the brow and down the steep slope, and with a laugh Bob sped away.

Simultaneously Raleigh and the stranger leaped forward, shouting. But already the sled was one hundred feet away. Peggy turned a laughing face to him—and the smile froze at the expression on his.

He swooped toward the skiis, and almost without stopping slipped his feet into them, snatched the stick and with a swift plunge glided away. He swayed, rocked—almost went over—sank to one knee. Then he recovered, and crouched to offer less

resistance to the wind. The ground dropped, and he seemed to lift and fly.

The sled had nearly one hundred yards the start. Raleigh tried to shout, but the wind choked his words, and flung them behind him with the snow streaming in his wake. He gained. Slowly the distance between them narrowed. But oh, so slowly, and they were both racing like shadows toward that dim line across the snow. Raleigh, his eyes blurred with water of the wind's making saw it drawing closer and spreading out, far below. As he watched it grew clearer, closer and clearer, with the lip of the precipice standing out white from the distant dim plane of the country beyond.

He knew Bob, flat on the sled, with the snow whirling round and the wind in his eyes, could not see, would not see, the thing that he saw, drawing closer and closer. The distance between them ceased to shorten; he was not gaining fast enough. The ground had flattened, and the sled, by the force of its greater momentum, pulled away from him visibly, moment by moment. He shouted. This time Bob heard; he turned round, waved, and beckoned to Raleigh. He thought it was a race. Raleigh's eyes closed for a moment.

Then he felt the ground drop blessedly from under him, as the hill stooped to a steeper descent. The distance between them narrowed, narrowed, but the line of the precipice was shockingly close. Raleigh straightened, and lifted one foot almost clear of the snow, to reduce the friction surface. The distance

closed; it was not more than one hundred feet now, and steadily diminishing; the speed was terrific.

Bob turned and looked back at him, with interest in his eyes and respect at Raleigh's poised sureness. Raleigh shouted again.

"Stop" he cried shrilly "stop—the quarry—the quarry" but the wind tore it away. He knew, too, that Bob's ears were filled with the whizzing snow of his own flight.

Inch by inch the distance between them narrowed. Raleigh looked ahead, and saw that the horizon had fallen below the lip of the quarry—knew it must be very near. But he was very near too . . . ten feet, five—three—two—he hunched, gathered himself like a panther, and lunged forward and sidewise on top the figure on the sled. Instantly came a blinding deluge of white as his dragging skiis caught the flying surface of the snow sidewise. A hot pain shot through his ankle as the skii twisted. His hands sought Bob's wrists, and with desperate, sudden strength, he tore Bob's hands from the sides of the sled, slid his arms round the other's chest and jerked backward and to the side. The sled slipped from under them. He fell on his back, Bob kicking impotently on top him. Instantly they began rolling over and over, Raleigh's skiis flying like flails, and occasionally thumping one or the other of them. Raleigh felt Bob's powerful chest and arms expand, and he tightened his grip, as he dug desperately into the snow with his skiis and elbows. He knew he must hold on to him, that he might make no effort

to stop his rolling if released. Every moment he expected a final slide, and then the sickening emptiness of space below them.

Then they stopped. It was very sudden. Raleigh did not himself realize it till he heard Bob's voice.

"Let go of me, you damned fool—what—"

He realized his arms were still locked in a death grip round Bob's chest, and that he had his face buried in the snow. With a sudden weakness he sank back in the snow.

A red, snow wet and exceedingly angry face appeared, and turned toward him. The gray eyes blazed.

"Say—if that's your idea of something funny—"

He caught the look in Raleigh's face and stopped quickly. At the same moment, apparently from somewhere far under them, rose a faint crash. Bob turned slowly over and got to his knees. Raleigh did likewise. Not two feet from them yawned cold space. Over the precipice's edge dropped a soft lip of snow, its curve broken to the bare rock where the point of Raleigh's skii had scooped it away in the last roll. Bob looked at it, then back to Raleigh. His face had gone suddenly gray. He flung toward him, and his hands shot out to the other's arms and gripped them. It was like the snatchings of a terrified child at its mother. His mouth worked.

"You knew," he got out, "you *knew*"—

Raleigh nodded, his body sagging. "It was close" he returned through stiff lips. He slipped out of his skiis. The sled's track cut clean grooves in the lip of

snow and vanished, with dreadful significance, into air. Raleigh dusted off the snow with one skii, and crawled cautiously forward, looked over, and beckoned to Bob, who crawled after him. Far below, they made out the splintered fragments of the sled, scattered among giant lumps of stone dwarfed by distance to marbles. Bob's stronger but less resilient nature could not so quickly adjust. He shuddered, and drew back, looking at Raleigh with wild eyes.

"My God" it was almost a groan, "and I thought you were a—" He flung an arm across his face as if to hide the wave of blood that mounted, red and heavy, to his white forehead.

"Oh, don't" cried Raleigh, softly, hastily. "It's all right." He turned away, but felt Bob's hand on his arm. The hand shook. Raleigh gripped it, and raised his eyes. Bob was past speech, but the look he gave Raleigh warmed him like wine. There were tears in the gray eyes.

Raleigh was too near collapse to permit of emotions. He took refuge behind the shield of flippancy.

"I'm so glad this happened" he observed, dusting the snow from his coat and not quite achieving a conversational tone. "Otherwise we should have undoubtedly come to blows, and I would have been reduced to liquid. Have you a dry cigarette about you? Mine look like a mustard plaster and smell like anchovy paste."

CHAPTER XIII

SECOND MEETINGS

"WE'LL have to make a couple of trips, now that the sled's gone" said Bill, looking down the slope to his diminutive Ford Sedan.

The stranger of the skiis, who stood on the edge of the group, came forward.

"My name's Wycherly" he said. "My place is just around the corner of the road, why don't you all come down and get warm, and then I'll run some of you in town in my car?"

Raleigh accepted promptly. Bill spoke aside to Peggy. "You and Bob and Fred stay with Mr. Raleigh. I'll take the two boys in with me." Bill's wife nodded and smiled—a solid person, who tactfully explained why Bill could not take the rest of them in one trip. The groups separated with brief farewells. "Stop by home and tell ma we'll be late" bawled Fred after them.

The "place" of Mr. Wycherly emerging from behind spruces tufted with the white fur of the snow, turned out to be a long, low house of rough stone, with an unmistakable air of well-being. They en-

tered a wainscoted hall, dark after the dazzle of the snow, and Wycherly led the way to a huge living room that filled one side of the house. Windows faced front and back, deep windows with broad seats below them. There was a long centre-table, with a big couch against it facing the fireplace, where a log fire glowed lazily against the rough-hewn stone of the chimney. Chintz and many bookcases and innumerable magazines gave color to the big room. In one corner a grand piano stood, trailing a Chinese shawl from its top.

"Sit down anywhere" said their host, drawing chairs toward the fire. "Here are cigarettes." He passed an Italian carved box on the table. As a matter of course, the box stopped beneath Peggy. That young lady's black eyebrows leaped into arches of slightly pleased astonishment.

"Oh no" she said, laughing the next second. "I can't. I always choke." The others helped themselves. Their host hovered at the door.

"Excuse me just a minute" he said "I want to get Mrs. Wycherly."

Raleigh limped to the fireplace and held out his hands to the blaze. Peggy came and stood beside him. The steam rose in wisps from their clothes. Fred sauntered round the big room with wide eyes of interest. Bob had picked up "Aviation" and was not looking at it, but watching Raleigh and Peggy as they stood together by the fireplace. Peggy was speaking in a low voice.

"I thought I'd die—before we could see you hadn't

gone over. The hill bumped up, you know, and hid you from the top. We didn't realize till Mr. Wycherly told us. Oh Dan"—it came out very hurriedly —"suppose you'd been——"

The door opened behind her, and a young woman with a crown of light hair and dark, flashing eyes hurried to Peggy, her hand out.

"Oh, Miss McGill—my husband told me——"

At her voice Raleigh had turned, and Mrs. Wycherly's words died as she saw him. Raleigh shouted.

"Anne!" he cried, both hands out to her. They talked at once.

"Rip! I never dreamed——"

"—didn't even know you were married, Anne—how——"

"—you were in this country—the last I——"

Wycherly was looking at them with amused eyes. His wife turned to him.

"Durant—you remember me telling you about the house-party where we put a cow in the Dean's study —it was Rip here who lured her up the stairs with chicken salad. Apparently chicken salad is a bovine passion."

Wycherly's dark face flashed white teeth in a delighted grin. He held out a hand to Raleigh.

"'08, Raleigh. You see, I'm an old man."

"'17 salutes you, Mr. Wycherly. It's a triumph. I never expected to see Anne Lindley actually anchored." They grinned with the ease of old friends. "You knew her nickname of course?"

Wycherly nodded assent. "'Intercollegiate Anne'."

"Yes." Raleigh turned suddenly to Peggy, conscious of a need for explanation.

"Mrs. Wycherly was at all the house parties while I was in college" he recounted. "We used to have to post pickets round the fraternity house where she was to keep the extra stags from murdering the man who had her up, and running off with her . . . Will you give me a light Freddy?" He deftly drew the two silent boys into the circle around the fire, and introduced them. Peggy was looking at Anne with a frank admiration that was singularly unfeminine and boyish.

"I don't wonder" she said slowly, in the dipping, low voice that Raleigh had grown to love, and with a sudden smile that traced her wreath of laughter lines. Anne Wycherly looked closely at her, and stifled a tiny sigh. Not for Anne again the rose-leaves of nineteen. She put a hand lightly on Peggy's arm.

"I'm very glad you weren't there, my dear" she laughed. "No man would have looked a second time at anyone else." She turned to Bob, who had shot her a quick look of appreciation. "I should think you would have all the emotions of Lazarus" she said. "My husband said it was a matter of inches." She looked at Raleigh, and suddenly pulled down his head and kissed him. "You deserve much more" she said, looking at him seriously.

Peggy, watching, felt a queer choking in her

throat, and unconsciously she stretched forth a hand. Then her mind rushed to its arrested functioning. No one had noticed—save Bob. But he, curiously enough, merely smiled.

They grew comfortable and warm round the fire, and Raleigh a little drowsy. The pain in his ankle was steadily diminishing. Anne, sensing the different *timbre* of the members of her party, played upon them like a skillful composer on an orchestra. Raleigh alone was conscious of it, and smiled inward appreciation. She nodded to the piano.

"Just been tuned, Rip. One of Mr. Steinway's best, if I'm to believe the agent. When we got it someone asked me what kind I wanted. 'Rosewood,' " said Anne, coyly. "I thought the agent would expire. Go over and play it, there's a dear."

"Come on Dan," cried Fred, suddenly coming to life. He and Bob had turned silent before the bewildering beauty of Anne and the unaccustomed light banter of her talk.

But Raleigh shook his head. He knew Anne's musical taste. He didn't want to play for the first time to Peggy under its gay and careless compulsion.

"Hand's stiff as boards, Anne" he said. "Another time I'll come out and tear off its front teeth. Not today, please."

"Temperamental mimosa" mocked Anne. She turned to Peggy. "The truth is, Miss McGill, he knows I have about as much music in me as an iguanodon."

Raleigh nodded, unabashed. "Rythmic noise was what you adored, Anne, if I remember rightly. It takes the strength of a Sandow and the flexibility of a snake. This morning I'm enfeebled with emotion and torpid with cold. Anyhow" glancing at his watch "I think we should go, shouldn't we?" to Peggy.

Anne looked from Raleigh to Peggy, and he could see she was plainly puzzled. "I'm spending the week-end at Miss McGill's" he said. "Fred and I work at the same place."

"Oh." Anne's discriminating social finger was beginning to prod.

"What are you doing? Don't think of going. I want to know all about you, Rip." She was talking to Raleigh, but her eyes lingered most often upon Bob. Most women's did. He radiated physical power, and his black brows and light hair, his very grave gray eyes and even features were enough to awaken the most ennuied to interest. She was prattling on to Raleigh. "I suppose you're writing sonnets for a free-press paper and shocking songs with no tunes to them" she pursued shamelessly.

Raleigh rose. He knew Anne.

"Writing music, and making steel, Anne" he returned. "I'm at work on a Symphonic Study at present. It begins fortissimo, swells to a fortississississimo, and dies away with shrieks. It's scored for three punch presses, four muted conveyors, first and second tube mills *divisi,* and a choir of dynamos, with an auxiliary battery of electric riveters——"

His nonsense was cut short by ululation of a motor outside. Anne turned to listen.

"That must be Eleanor Grayson and——"

"Who?"

The triple question shot at once from Raleigh, Peggy and Bob. Raleigh went on. "Why, I had tea with her not long ago. How amusing—almost the one person I know here. You know her, don't you Peggy?"

Peggy nodded, and fell to expounding Eleanor's activities with the enthusiasm that was part of her generosity. Anne however, heard no word. She was watching Bob. He had risen, after that one explosive question, and was looking about him like a caged lion.

Almost at once the front door burst open, and in streamed a bevy of youngsters in sport clothes. Babel ensued. Eleanor greeted Raleigh with a surprised smile of pleasure. Two tall lads in knickers promptly posted themselves beside Peggy. The room suddenly was very full of people who all talked loudly at once. Raleigh, after an instant's chat with Eleanor, caught Anne's eye. She nodded and met him at the door.

"We must go, Anne. It's been bully of you——"

"I sent Durant for the car. He's in front now."

Thus Raleigh missed Eleanor's sudden gasp as her eyes met Bob's. He was leaning against the wall in the corner of the room, and had not taken his eyes from her face. He came to her and their hands met.

"Bob!" she managed, a little breathless, her cool poise tottering to destruction. "Why, I"—across the minds of both swept the picture of a black road in France, a disabled ambulance. . . .

"I—it's quite taken my breath." She glanced to the door. "You have to go. Will you come and see me at five next Thursday?"

Bob smiled suddenly. "Yes" he said quietly, in a voice a little unsteady. He turned and strode to the door.

Anne shooed them into the motor, talking violently, principally to Raleigh.

"—must come out, Rip, now that we've found you . . . Net Atwood and Tom Allen . . . yes—so glad to have met you, Miss McGill; you quite do me in with envy . . . Athletic Club Tuesday night, Rip——"

Raleigh shook his head. "Busy, Anne. I'll call you up, though—It's been great to see you . . ."

Peggy, Bob and Raleigh climbed into the back seat of the long car and Fred, with critical admiration, into the front seat beside Wycherly. "Fine car" he said. "Like the valve-in-the-head motor?" They fell into easy man-talk about engines at once.

"It is women," thought Raleigh suddenly "who make social distinctions possible." He pondered over this. Anne had disturbed him. She had flashed back his old world, tantalizingly, yet under its erstwhile suave shape Raleigh felt he could see a certain flinty hardness, a brittle skeleton peeping through. It was as if his new experience were an

acid that ate away the surface. Tom Allen—the Athletic Club—dances, conversations feverishly brilliant . . . He was looking through the small end of an opera glass. Eleanor's words of a recent talk came back to him "Marionettes—and my enjoyment of the play has suffered since I've peeped behind at the people that pull the strings."

They were quiet as the car sped cityward, and the houses began to straggle into irregular and slatternly outposts. Bob had not uttered a word. Just before they reached home, Peggy turned to Raleigh after a long silence.

"Did you know Mrs. Wycherly awfully well?" she asked.

CHAPTER XIV

ORPHEUS ON MAIN STREET

PEGGY drew him aside after dinner.

"Do you really want to go over next door and play for us?"

She looked so reproachful that he laughed. "Will there be a mob?" he asked.

"A mob? Oh—I see. No, only Emmiline Stacey—it's her piano—and her father and mother. You mustn't mind Emmiline; she's kind o' loud sometimes."

"I'd rather have just you."

"I'd rather have just me too" said Peggy. She turned to the door. Raleigh and Fred picked up their hats. Bob rose from his book and slid into his coat.

"You comin'?" asked Fred jocosely. "I never knew music meant anythin' in your young life."

"Never has" responded Bob imperturbably. "I'm coming, though."

Raleigh spoke with great decision. "Don't by any means if it's going to bore you" he said a trifle crisply.

Bob looked at him. "I don't think you'd be likely

to bore me" he returned squarely. It pleased Raleigh.

Miss Stacey greeted them from the front door, a gold tooth flashing them in like a welcoming traffic signal. A diamond comb gleamed from her hair. She wore a necklace made, apparently, of crystal eggs, each with a shining center, and round earrings of glass with pictures of Woodrow Wilson enshrined within them, and terminating in small pearls. Her hair gleamed like cooper bushing. Miss Stacey might have posed above a pawn shop—her small head was scarce larger than the two huge puffs that sided it.

They entered a rather small room. A tiled fireplace with a gas grate therein and two decks of mantel-shelves covered with china mugs and seashells on red plush filled one side of the wall. There was wall-paper of brown, with panels and a red growth from the mind of some tired decorator rioting over it.

Two elderly people were playing checkers. There were laconic and pleasant greetings. The old man held out a hand to Bob. "Why, I didn't think no dynamite'd git you out Sunday night" he said, with a ponderous wink at the others. Raleigh was introduced. There fell a little silence.

"Well, Dan," said Fred at last, "how about it?"

He grinned at the piano, an upright whose surface shined righteously with varnish that revealed every fleck of the golden oak beneath. Over its front, like foreign labels on a new steamer trunk, were plastered

startling covers of sheet-music—a girl's face—with one blue eye and one shadowed green, emerging from a lustrous purple background whence gleamed two eyes beneath the legend "The Baby Devil Vamp (The Kiss of Death)." On another, an impossibly lovely Ethiopian looked over a calico shoulder to a long path of moonlight, which crinkled its way from the shirtfront of a wellknown comedian to a patch of red and blue watermelons. Twisting and lurid vinestalks curved the statement "Them Watermelon Blues (I'm just a Lovin' Watermelon Man)."

Raleigh looked at them, then back to the others. He seated himself and twiddled the piano stool down.

Peggy came and stood beside the piano, leaning against Fred. He smiled. The game of checkers went on. Emmiline was gently ogling Bob, who had sunk rather helplessly into a chair across the room. Raleigh felt something was due her as hostess.

"What shall I play?" he asked. He damned fervently under his breath.

Emmiline simpered. "Oh, anything, just anything at all." She came over and fumbled in the blare of colored sheets, and drew forth one. "This is awful good" she said, spreading it out "It's grand to jazz to. I love the part where it goes ta-tee-ta-ta-ta, but them sixteenth notes gets me every time."

Raleigh glanced through it. To the legend that *"I've got the cutest little baby doll you ever saw, you ever saw, Yes boy how she can love, that turtle dove,"* ran a melody whose virtues were its ryhthmic strictness and its adherence to the five lines of the

staff. It had an impudent directness not without charm. Raleigh grimaced at the harmonization—it had been pared down to bare structure for simplicity—and that structure a clumsy one.

He looked at Emmiline. She was talking to Bob and her parents again.

"Want me to play this?' he said politely.

"Oh yes—it's so cute to jazz to." She turned again to Bob.

Raleigh played it uncompromisingly—emphasizing the thin accompaniment and not putting in one note that wasn't on the page before him. Before the first bar was past, he heard Mrs. Stacey's comfortable voice in placid inquiry.

"Emmiline, did you get that gingerale from the grocery?"

Raleigh finished with a vicious bang, and stopped. Emmiline's voice rose on the sudden silence.

"And he says to m' there's no use kiddin' *me* along. . . ."

Raleigh quirked his eyebrows at Peggy quizzically, and sought to subdue the rising anger in him. She looked at him with pained eyes. Raleigh straightened his shoulders. It shouldn't be spoiled like this.

Without warning he brought his hands down with a crashing discord. Mrs. Stacey's start sent the checkers spinning. Emmiline's jaw hung open in mid-sentence. Bob blinked, and the muscles at his jaw sprang into sudden prominence. All Raleigh's outraged artist sense was in the chord.

He allowed the notes to die away into absolute

silence. He felt the awed look of the Staceys on the back of his neck, but the atmosphere had perceptibly cleared.

Then he began to play the same tune again, but it was subtlely changed. Through its lilting syncopation stole threads of strangely lovely counter melody —sprays and wreaths of chromatic decorations flung themselves lightly through the trellis of the rhythm. It ended with a scurrying of tiny feet at the top of the piano.

Peggy felt a shiver of delight up and down her spine. Raleigh had waved a magic wand, and an impudent little Cinderella, with harmonic smuts on her nose, had turned into a shimmering elfin princess.

Then he began it again, gravely, with slowed time and thoughtful harmonies. Processions of tonsured men passed; the tall shadows clustered round gothic pillars. This built to a resounding glory of mellow chords; sun flooded dimly through stained glass—flambeaux burned straight in the crepuscular gloom of high altars. The Cinderella was become Jeanne D'Arc, a shining saint in a window.

Again there was an instant's stillness. Then, high and faint, came a call from a Highland trumpet, echoing from dark crag to dark crag above the heather. Again it came, then joyously the swing of sturdy feet along a mountain trail—men's voices deep in song—browned faces—the even movement of tanned bare knees. They passed. Wistfully, a questioning melody stole out of somewhere, and swelled into a poignant cry. Bob's hand suddenly tight-

ened; Fred's arm slipped quietly round his sister. Swiftly the melody flung up like a wave to a throbbing crest of vibrant questioning, then died away into the Scotch hills, unanswered.

Raleigh's head bent above the piano for a moment. He knew he had played well, for he felt the stir of it himself. He looked to Peggy, and found she had vanished. Bob's chin was sunk on his chest, but his eyes met Raleigh's with such a look of pain that he stared, for the moment forgetting Peggy.

Then Emmiline Stacey heaved a sigh that shook all the crystal eggs on her ample bosom.

"Gosh, ain't that lovely" she pronounced epically, as Peggy appeared from behind a curtain door. Her eyes were wet. She looked at Raleigh. He rose quickly. The room stirred. Peggy came close to him, her big voice broken.

"Oh" she cried softly "I—I——"

Eleanor's beautifully toned room swept oddly across Raleigh's mind, her light, lovely voice, her pat response—"fairy horns muted for the death of the court jester." Raleigh looked into Peggy's face. He laughed a little breathlessly.

"You *know!*" he cried incomprehensively but with profound conviction.

CHAPTER XV

REHEARSALS

TWO men were walking down 57th Street, talking—one in argument, with an occasional outflung thumb or a raised shoulder of protest. He walked smoothly—too smoothly, with the suggestion of one continually glancing over his shoulder in the furtive bend of his legs. His eyes darted continually to the face of his companion and away with quick little thrusts. One hand fingered a pointed chin—the other flicked a cigarette, and his eyes were so close set that one had the impression that his nose had grown up somehow between a single eye.

The second man said little, nodded often, and occasionally asked a question, his graceful loosely hung body moving easily beside his shorter companion. When he gestured, it was with the poise of the speaker, arm and body swaying together in a way to dramatize his few words. His voice matched his eyes, cold with the calculating remoteness one sees in a cat watching birds in a bush.

As they reached Seventh Avenue, the shorter man shrugged his shoulders. "Well," he hesitated—

"you're running things, of course, but I think that now's a bad time to move. This man Raleigh——"

The other stopped him. "You've mentioned him frequently, and told me nothing about the man himself. Who is he, Mengles?"

Mengles spat dextrously into the gutter. "Damned if I know. He talks like a swell and looks like one too. Came here about two months ago, and started this quartet stuff I been tellin' you about. It all looks like a stall, but I can't connect him with anybody at all. Everybody likes him. Mulgully beat hell out of him when he first came, but he sure took it like a man. The point is, he's getting the foreigners with him ab-so-lutely."

The taller man turned on the other a speculative grey eye. "Then sign him up right away, of course."

Mengles stared. "But how do you know he ain't a man of Harde's?"

The bigger man's voice was smooth. "How does one ever know anything, my friend? One takes a chance. There is nothing to lose in talking to him—you can simply ask him to join, that's all." His eyes flickered and became warm. "Can't I make you see that we have to clean up this shop now? It is a pivot. If we get it, we shall also get the Malleable, and the Inverness will come. They're just hanging. Then, then"—he stopped, his eyes far off, his head lifted a little, so that the grey in his hair showed, and the strong lines of his face, water-marked with faded scars, and just now quivering a little. What he actually saw was a cinema of flashing scenes—a

stooped, thin man bending above a casting, a ladle, glowing with hot metal swinging in an arc above him, then a sudden clank and a cascading of liquid flames—shrieks—and a small boy, grimy, pallid, bending over a writhing body that bit at the black dust of the casting mould . . . then another picture—a squat room with a fringe of children hushed about its door, a gaunt eyed woman, and a tall, well-groomed man, who drew on pearl grey gloves and voiced cool, detached refusals. He had been the small boy—that writhing body his father's.

This repeated drama was what Grabler always saw, when his eyes took their far off look. This his compeers did not know, this core of the man that was his strength and his weakness. They thought that he was building organizations for the future.

Mengles, who knew better than to interrupt his chief (and who secretly despised him as a theorist), waited resignedly, flashing now and then a glance at Grabler, and biting the side of his little finger.

The latter's eyes gradually resumed their normal aloofness, and he presently stared at Mengles with usual detachment.

"You say they're having a meeting here tonight?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Let's look in on them, if we can."

Grabler inquired at the desk for Raleigh. A large-faced man, upon whose blonde countenance dwelt professional benevolence, told them that Raleigh was conducting a meeting, down in the auditorium.

"What sort of a meeting?" asked Grabler, dropped lids apathetic over the cigarette he lighted. As the match flamed up, the man behind the counter adjusted his features to a deeper benevolence, and laid a broad white hand on Grabler's arm, as one who would cover a multitude of sins.

"We don't smoke in this room, brother," he beamed, voicing a tender patience that winged seraphically above erring man.

"Oh," said Grabler. He put his foot on the match and repeated his question.

"We don't know much of Mr. Raleigh" returned the man, with less keen assurance. "He plays for the young men occasionally, but doesn't participate in Association matters. I'm afraid he lacks interest in affairs of the spirit. He offended Mr. Brahley—one of our workers—by,—um—his attitude at a Bible class."

"What sort of meeting?" asked Grabler again, with a twitch of impatience.

"I don't quite know. I think that he is doing social work in connection with his music. All sorts of men, mostly foreigners, come here often, and I have heard them singing in the auditorium."

"Where is it?" cut in Mengles.

"First stairway to the left, in the basement."

The two men found the auditorium locked, all save one door, about which clung a curious half-dozen young men from the building. Grabler peered in, and Mengles crowded beside him. The darkened

auditorium led down to the stage. This shone in half light and was filled with men lined up across it, talking to each other in undertones. In a circle of light below the stage lay a grand piano, and Raleigh, coatless and flamingly cravated, bent over the music rack, pencil in hand. As the two slipped in, he finished with a quick dab at a page, and leaped to his feet, facing the stage.

"Now!" he cried. "Begin again. That last was awful. Mulgully, you've got to keep your voice down where I make a face at you, otherwise Giovanni will never be heard at all. Watch me more, all of you, and keep together. Now!"

He rapped the pencil on the piano. Instantly the men ceased talking, and faced him. At the disciplined unanimity of it Grabler, huddled into a seat, leaned forward sharply. This was better even than he had hoped. Giovanni, the swart and fiery leader of the Italians, beamed from the front row—beside him Polidski, and farther along explosive with whiskers, the towering figure of Kalousdian, and Cszysdik, his dark face merry as Mengles had never seen it over a press—they were all there, all the men whom Mengles knew were leaders, each of his own countrymen.

Then Raleigh's pencil went up, paused, and came sharply down, followed by a spurt of song, as if it had been a bung drawn from a barrel of pent voices. He led through several phrases, then abruptly stopped them, and began crisp suggestions, now in English, now in Italian—once in a halting dialect that brought

delighted grins from two strapping Bohemians and nods of comprehension.

Grabler sucked in his breath. "God!" he touched Mengles' knee—"that's great—look at them—not a sound. Why, he's got that bunch solid with him—he knows how to control people——"

Raleigh's lifted voice cut in. "Well—that's all for tonight. It's going to be fine, boys, believe me—I'm proud of you. We'll rip the roof right off the Welfare Building. Remember—tomorrow night—the whole bunch of you—and I'll have the costumes for the minstrel act."

He dropped into a seat beside the piano and ran his hands through his tangled blonde curls, talking vigorously to a man beside him. The group on the stage broke out of line, and began tramping out of the hall in twos and threes, now and then stopping to speak to him or to grin at the man beside him. Mulgully turned back and called.

"Hey Rosy—do I honest-to-Gawd have to shave off my mustache for this minstrel show?" There were scattered chuckles. Raleigh flung a grin over his shoulder.

"Absolutely, Mully. Anybody with tombstone teeth can't hide 'em under a bush like that if he's goin' to play coon."

Before the first men reached the doors, Mengles and his chief were leaving the lobby. The latter was talking in quick, whip-like phrases..

"You've got to get him. I don't care how you do it, but you've got to get him with us. The young

idiot probably doesn't at all realize what he is doing. Offer him anything. Wait—" he paused a moment —"maybe you'd better let me handle him entirely."

Mengles sighed relief. "I wish you would," he stated with rare sincerity. "He's over my head."

In the auditorium two men still remained beside Raleigh. Culhane, responding to Raleigh's invitation of the morning, had bound the white collar of gentility about his red and muscular neck, and had listened open-mouthed through Raleigh's rehearsal. At first a little conscious of the presence of their foreman, the men had promptly forgotten him as the spell of group-expression grew upon them, until Culhane marvelled at the different beings who stood before him—men whom he would have never recognized as the stolid, impenetrable lumps who functioned as so much power in his department. This ransformation the Celtic cell in Pat's brain registered keenly, and he wondered.

McGill also lingered, his grey eyes resting affectionately on Raleigh, who with an "Excuse me a minute, boys," had seized a manuscript and was jotting down notes from the rehearsal. McGill watched him a moment, then turned to Culhane.

"Some boy, ain't he?" he murmured softly, drawing out a crumpled package of cigarettes and proffering it. Culhane shook his head, and produced a cigar with the dignity that all smokers of the weed affect toward the flippancy of cigarettes, and bit off the end absently. Raleigh, finishing his notes with a flourish, turned on the piano bench and faced them.

"Well, what do you think?" he asked Culhane.

The Irishman's blue eyes snapped.

"I think it's swell," he voiced emphatically. "But what gets my goat is this—how do you get all that out of a bunch of Bohunks that I've been worryin' about for six months—I mean—all these furriners. I never paid no attention to 'em 'cept to wonder how soon they'd hold a Bolshy-vikey meetin' to blow the place up."

Raleigh creased a paper slowly, looking at the foreman with a faint smile.

"They're all so damned human, Pat" he answered. "They may seem stupid to you—they don't think as much as Americans, I guess, but most of them *feel* a lot more. And, because they've got a hundred years of tradition and folk-music and superstition back of them where we have one, they're intuitively musical—they 'get' music as a dog gets smells. Deep, deep down inside them lives an instinct built through centuries of a time when there were no books, and men's stories were sung from father to son—an instinct that sings, and that has gathered all the sadness of old dark times long ago into its singing—what's the matter?"

For Pat had brought his fist down thump on his knee, and an internal struggling manifest through Raleigh's dreamy speech burst out of him. The caste of his peasant Irish ancestry spoke as he leaned toward Raleigh.

"It may be none o' my damn business, but I got to get this out of my system" he said gruffly. "You

talk like a guy in a book. You look like one of the big bosses—and talk sort of like them, too. What are the likes of you doin' in my shop—and what are you doin' all this—this music stuff for—with these furriners? If that's your game, why ain't you studyin' it in a night school? Why all this?" He leaned back, suddenly abashed.

Raleigh stared at him a moment, then laughed.

"Good, Pat. Right enough. I don't wonder it seems a waste of time to you. Well—I'll try to explain. I'm in your shop because I needed money, wanted a change of living, and thought that I could get both by doing this. As to the music—" he rubbed his hand backward through his hair. "I don't know that I can explain——"

"I'd like to know about that, too. You're always talking stuff to Semanyov and Giovanni way over my head." This from Freddy.

Raleigh nodded, turning to Culhane. "Pat," he said, "you spoke of my going to a night school of music. This is my night school—these men and their folk-music." He spoke slowly, assuming as much as possible the point of view of his listeners. "You know how high-brow music sounds—no tune, nothing to keep time for?"

Both men nodded vaguely.

"Well, you know how things like 'Annie Laurie' or 'Kentucky Home' or 'Wearin' O' the Green' make you feel funny?"

Pat nodded, this time with emphasis. "Like you was goin' to laugh and cry all at once inside."

"Exactly! Now, if you get together the folk-songs of any people from niggers in Virginia to Russians by the Volga, you'll find they've all got just that quality, of making you want to cry and laugh. Well—." He paused, groping for terms familiar to Pat and Fred. They were waiting quietly. Then he turned to Pat.

"Pat, suppose you had never seen a Hydraulic press, never even heard of one, and somebody stuck ten different models of 'em up in front of you, and told you to find what made them all work, what would you do?"

"Why, I'd look 'em over, I spose, and find they all run on the hydraulic principle, even if they did have different valves and chambers or a different pressure surface."

"All right. Suppose somebody told you to build a press of your own, but different from any of them."

"Take the best features of all of 'em and build it on the principle o' hydrostatic pressure."

"Right! Well, this is what I am trying to do. Music that amounts to anything, must have something in it that makes you *feel* things when you hear it, like the folk-songs. Now, I've gotten lots of different kinds of folk-songs together, like the different models of your presses. One has one kind of valve, you say; another, some different sort. Well, a Finnish folk-song sounds entirely different from a south England one. They are as different as a press that turns out a brake-band and one that turns out a

wagon-body. But they've all got something in them that makes you *feel,* just as both presses work on the hydrostatic principle. I want to find the principle back of the folk-songs, because I want to use it in building *my* press—in writing music that will get in people's hearts."

He leaned back, a little breathless.

"Oh! I get you now," cried Freddy. "That was what you meant by the 'old modes' you said were in that Polish junk Sapinski was singing to you?"

"Yes. It is the——"

Culhane interrupted. "You written any yet?"

"Yes—lots. But nothing trying to use the principle of folk-music except one." He hesitated, but the temptation to bare his musical soul was too great, even to understanding as limited as that of Pat and Fred. They were evidently interested, at least. Raleigh lit another cigarette, and continued.

"You see, some of these tunes are thousands of years old. Most of them mean certain things. And at the time they originated, the people believed that the music actually had power—that if you sang or heard a certain kind of tune long enough, it would get you as the snake charmer gets the snake. For instance, the priests in India sang, and still sing, certain chants to the people coming to the temple to be cured, believing that the music has a definite effect on the sick people coming for help. Specific scales like this were called 'modes'."

Pat tilted an amused chin. "You mean to tell me that if Father O'Sullivan and a bunch more of him

stood up in front of me and sang tunes, it would make me get well, if I had the itch?" he demanded.

Raleigh exploded. "Well—not exactly—the itch. But if you felt sick in your mind, and blue, a good tune would certainly cheer you up."

Pat was thinking, slowly, and aloud. "Well, look here. Suppose somebody had a spite on you, some o' these old birds with this here powerful music——"

"Ah," Raleigh wriggled joyfully to his subject. "Black magic. There was music of that sort. They put spells on people with it, and sometimes killed them, under proper conditions."

"Ah, hell," scoffed Freddy, stretching his big arms wide. "You don't believe that, do you?"

"I don't know." Raleigh stared out across the darkness of the auditorium, a far-away look making his merry face grave as a Buddha for a moment. Then he swung suddenly to the piano and began to play.

Only a few low chords, repeating a harsh theme, but rising slowly in pitch and volume, till the auditorium was throbbing with the monotone of the fierce repetition. It was old—old. Raleigh played on till the sobbing insistent rhythm spun in the heads of the two men, and they shifted uneasily in their chairs. Then he increased the time, and lifted the theme into a fiercer harmony. Pat turned to Fred, uneasily.

"Wish he'd stop that damn thing," he growled under his breath. "It fair gives me the creeps." Raleigh heard, and crashed to an abrupt finish. The

two regarded him silently, their faces strangely childlike. Pat presently spoke. "What—what is that thing?"

"Devil-dance used in part of the Kali cult in Bengal. *Now* listen."

He played again, with the strong, marching rhythm of giant feet, sturdy and happy. The theme was simple as an elemental force, and had all the oneness of big stretches of plain, of a body of water, of a rugged mountain. Supporting it lay a rude harmony, which broadened and grew rich and warm as the thing went on. Pat began to tap his toe and tilt his head, and McGill, after rumbling an undertone accompaniment, burst out in his big baritone.

"We're gathered in from all the earth
From North and East and South and West
We play the game and hit the trail
But making steel we do the best.

"And all of us are hard to beat
At any job you take us to—
And most of us are tough to heat—
And stand a lot you rake us through.

"From crane to car, the shops all show it,
We stick together everywhere,
We're damn fine fellows, and we know it,
We play the game, and play it square."

He wound up with a crashing chord, and swung to Pat, to see his face alight.

"That's some tune! Where'd you get that?"

"What does it make you think of?"

"Oh—I don't know—like a football game—I want to get up and yell—'Stick together boys—we're a hell of a fine bunch!'"

Raleigh started. "As close as that," he murmured to himself. To Pat——

"Then maybe you'd like to know that it's based on an old mode in a hymn to Apollo, and was chanted by the priests of Delphi three thousands of years ago as a charm to make the worshippers loyal to Apollo."

Pat gathered himself together and put a hand to his sleeked head. "Come on Freddy," he said weakly, heaving to his feet, "I've had about all I can stand for awhile." He held out his hand to Raleigh, sobering. "Good-night, kid. You sure win."

Half way up the sloping aisle, Pat turned back, his grin illuminating the darkness.

"Say kid," he called "what's the name of this here old music o' yours?"

"The Hyperdorian Mode. Why?"

"Oh, nuthin'. I was goin' to name a new press I'm designin' after it, but if the Patent office ever heard of that, they'd classify it as a foldin' corset. 'Night."

CHAPTER XVI

APPASSIONATO

ELEANOR awaited the approach of five o'clock with something akin to stage-fright. She had maneuvered the banishment of her mother. She paced the living room in the firelight with hurried steps that took her from the piano to the long seat before the fireplace. She made no attempt to conceal the fact that the sudden meeting with Bob had stirred her out of the suave coverings that she had all her life moved in.

She dropped upon the seat by the fire, and realized with dismay that the restlessness that had worried her on her return from France was due not so much to the sheltered uneventfulness of her life as to a vivid incident that had never wholly been banished; that her friends bored her because she unconsciously had been comparing them to the man at the center of that incident. Pictures floated before her, obscuring the warm beauty of the room—a broken ambulance, fortunately empty, stranded on a black and windy road—a sudden checked clatter of horses' hoofs, and a kind voice out of the darkness. They dared risk no lights.

"I'll take you in" the voice had said. "Come here." She had felt her way to the horse, touched a man's leg. "Now." The voice had come close to her ear, and before she could move, two powerful arms had swung her up, and she was perched in front of him. One arm was round her, and she was suddenly very comforted by its tense thickness. She had talked for a time and gone to sleep. A chin occasionally brushed her hair. She had awakened to a feeling of warm, firm lips against her own, and realized that she was being kissed. She remembered settling a little closer to the broad chest under the rough uniform, and of thinking how little it really mattered, and of kissing him back with a tired, dreamy unconcern that now, in the propriety of her drawing-room, sent her restlessly to the window.

Other pictures came—of a hospital, of long convalescent walks with a wounded man under the thin green sunshine of spring. Somehow they had never talked a great deal. It was as if she had taken up a completely new personality for some ten days or two weeks, and when he went away again, laid it down with the bewilderment of one waking from sleep. Everything about it was isolated from the rest of her life.

Then she heard the bell ring and the door open, and flew to the mirror to pat her hair. She sat down composedly enough in front of the tip-table.

He came in quietly, and stood for a moment at the door as Raleigh had done. She rose.

"I'm so glad to see you" she said glibly. He mut-

tered something, took her hand, dropped it, stared round, then back at her. Her tongue went on. "You can't fancy how surprised I was to see you Sunday; I didn't know"—for the life of her she couldn't go on. She tried desperately for the easy camaraderie of France, but the steady deep glow coming into his eyes made her clumsy. He stood, a little awkwardly, his hands hanging at his sides. She went on rapidly.

"Why didn't you tell me that you lived here? You merely said the west. And—and it was so hurried, your going."

Bob looked at her and spoke with grave directness. "I knew you were here" he said in a low tone. "I—I didn't expect to see you again."

Eleanor's eyes widened in surprise, then suddenly she understood. Thanks to an industrious society editor, almost anyone might know that she was "here"—she read his mind, and looked down uncomfortably. She tried to keep upon the sure ground of superficialities.

"How do you take tea?" she asked. "Lemon or cream?"

He made a gesture of dismissal. "Oh, any way."

Eleanor rushed on. "Wasn't it curious, your brother knowing Dan Raleigh—and to think I've seen your sister twice, without knowing. Of course, the name—I wondered—" She stopped helplessly, his strain snaring her words.

"There's lots of McGills" he muttered, holding his teacup helplessly, and gazing into it with unvarying stare. The silence grew intolerable. Eleanor

felt herself flushing. It had been a great mistake. She should never have asked him.

"Did you have a good time coasting Sunday?" she asked finally. Then she remembered the incident of the quarry and the runaway sled, and fell on it with eagerness. "But of course—I had forgotten for a minute—it was very nearly a tragedy, wasn't it? Mrs. Wycherly told me after you left. How lucky that Mr. Raleigh knew how to ski. By the way, have you heard him play? It is charming—he played some of his own things for me the other evening, and I loved them—I think he is the most talented person I have ever known."

Bob deliberately but quickly put down his teacup, and circled the table to her in a stride. He bent over her, and his hands seized her wrists.

"Are you in love with Dan?" he said.

The suddenness of it scattered her light speech to atoms. She could only stare at him, the blood mounting to her forehead. His hands tightened till they hurt.

"Are you?" He repeated, his voice losing something of its steadiness.

Her amazement was in her voice. "No" she replied, startled into spontaneous utterance. "I'd never even thought of it."

He sighed with relief, and released her hands. He drew a chair close to her, his awkwardness suddenly gone from him. He took her hands again. Eleanor, dismayed at the tumult going on inside herself, leaned back against the tip-table and tried to

think. This was not at all what she had planned. She had thought to be kind,—oh very kind, and to talk about industrial conditions and not allow for one moment the atmosphere of France to creep in on them. She realized that it had come, that it hung around them like a cloud, blotting out the protecting stability of her surroundings. He was speaking in deep hurried tones unlike his usual slow grave utterance.

"I can't help it. You've got to hear me. You know I love you, Eleanor."

A silence.

"Look at me."

She raised her eyes then, a little frightened by the hungry look in the man's face. It was set like white marble. She noticed the bunched muscles at the jaws, the fine-cut mouth above the hard chin. His hands trembled. The blaze in his eyes burned away his last reserve.

"Eleanor—do you care—*do you care?*"

Her cool poise, the gift of her years of training, of her assured, competent inheritance, dissolved before the singing tempest of stark physical emotion, and it was only with faint dismay that she realized that she *wanted* his arms round her, longed for the sweet stinging contact of his face against her own, that she ached for him with a force that slowly drew them together . . . She wrenched her hands violently away, rose suddenly, and turned to the window, her hand at her throat. He followed instantly. She held out her hands.

"Don't touch me" came in a low voice that she heard with surprise as her own. "Please Bob—I want to think—it's—you—I—"

"Eleanor! You do care."

She looked unseeingly at the lights across the park for a moment. The wave of emotion by its very violence had brought its swift passing. She faced him steadily. She had forgotten how very white his forehead was, and the contrast of the black brows and light hair, and the curious deep indentation of the eyes.

"Well?"

She smiled faintly. His set look somehow brought the boyishness of him only closer to the surface. She met his eyes very seriously.

"I—I don't know, Bob. I am very fond of you. I know that isn't enough."

"You seemed more than fond of me—then."

Eleanor flushed. "That was different" she returned softly, looking down. She missed the bitterness of his suddenly sharpened glance.

"Different?" His voice was hard. "Why different? Because we both had on uniforms, I suppose, and you didn't know I'd worked in a shop—"

"Bob!" Eleanor's head had drawn back as if he had struck her. She eyed him indignantly, and was not even conscious, then, of a guilty twinge. "You know that's not what I meant in the least." She stopped a moment to arrange her words, and went on more slowly. "It was different because, in

France, we none of us thought—we just felt. After we had been there for any time at all, it seemed useless and futile to think. I couldn't—and didn't. And—" she hesitated, then brought out bravely, with a rush—"you have a tremendous physical attraction for me, Bob—more than any man I ever knew. And now"—she broke off again, staring into the fire, and went on quickly, in a low tone, "Love must be more than that."

She saw the astonishment in his face, and hurried on. "You really don't know me at all, Bob. You might not like me at all if you did. You might find I——"

He cut in brusquely. It rather shocked him to hear a girl discuss emotions like that. It made him uneasy. He brushed his hand over his face as if to clear it of cobwebs.

"I don't care anything about all that. I love you —you must tell me if it's any good." There was pain in his eyes.

She sighed. The tangle was getting worse. The more she tried to think it through, the deeper into introspective quicksands she sank. And under it all, lay a continual tugging at her to cast thought to the winds and yield completely.

"Oh dear—I don't *know*" she cried. "I'm trying to tell you—you'll have to wait, Bob, until I—"

She stopped before the sudden radiance of his face.

"That's all I want to know" he told her quietly, with a smile. "If there isn't anyone else, and you're

—you're not sure you don't care—why, you've been at the bottom of everything I've done for two years, and I didn't even know whether you were engaged or not."

The woman does not live who can see a man wearing her kerchief in his casque without something of the thrill of Guinevere. Eleanor looked at him as she stood in the firelight, his square, chiselled face, his athlete's body, his earnestness that enhanced the boy-quality to her. Impulsively she stepped to him.

"You dear boy" she said very softly. She stood on tiptoe suddenly, and kissed his forehead. He did not move, but drew a little breath, and his eyes lighted swiftly.

"Now you must go" she said a little confusedly. "I must dress for dinner. Come again Saturday—no, I have a theatre party then—come next Monday night—"

He took her in his arms silently, kissed her long, then hurried from the room.

Eleanor stood until the closing of the front door came to her. Then, almost as in a dream, moved slowly across the room and sank down on an ottoman. She sat for a long time in the semi-darkness. She did not think—her senses had drowned her mind.

Lucia, the maid came in, started at seeing her, stared, then came forward and began clearing the tea-table. The clink of cups and the low chime of the silver roused her slowly. She looked round at the room as if she had never seen it before. Gradu-

ally the accustomed atmosphere of it wrapped her; the wine singing in her veins turned back to blood. The deep, harmonic beauty of the room, the soft lines gleaming from polished wood in the dying firelight, the shimmer of crystal at the candelabra; they were all sedatives. Lucia came in again and carried out the tea-table. Eleanor's mind, the cool poised mind that weighed and counselled, began to stir again. Occasionally its working relapsed as something stronger rushed over it—the feeling of Bob's swift embrace, and the frightening, stinging touch of his face . . .

Lucia came in and stood before her. "Miss Eleanor . . ." then again. "Miss Eleanor?"

Eleanor started and looked up. "Yes, Lucia—what is it?"

"Peter wants to know whether you want Mrs. Grayson's electric or your sedan tomorrow morning, Miss Eleanor. He says there's something wrong with the limousine."

Eleanor listened, with a mixture of reluctance and relief growing on her face. Lucia looked at her curiously, for there was an expression that the maid, since the days of Eleanor's babyhood, had never seen there.

"The sedan will do, Lucia. I want to get away from the house by nine-thirty."

She moved slowly upstairs, to find Helene, her own maid, putting bath salts in the steaming water. Her evening dress lay ready; a fire burned brightly at the hearth; the bowl of golden roses David Harde

always kept full from his own conservatory glowed on her table. It was as if threads, invisible, soft threads, sprang from all these things and began to weave round her a web of comfort, with a restful sense of accustomed authority. She began taking off her clothes, slowly.

Her telephone rang; she took it from its pink doll container. Vermylia's high, pleasant voice came to her.

"Hello—Eleanor? That you? Dinner at eight instead of eight-thirty. I thought I'd let you know in time. It was my mistake."

It was all part of the same spell. She answered like one in a play. "Thanks Vernon. The flowers are lovely—you're a dear to send them." Her voice was so gentle that Vermylia, at the other end of the phone, sat up excitedly. "I'll be all ready for you, Vernon—I'm wearing the dress you like to go with the flowers. At present I'm too undressed to talk to any man without embarrassment. Goodbye."

All through the long dinner, in which Vernon Vermylia tried to hold her hand and was allowed to with such an amused smile that he dropped it like a scorpion, she tried to visualize Bob beside her. She thought how clean and square his face would look above the dinner coat. She tried to imagine him bowing to fat Emelie Breede, as Harry Duncan was doing, or alternately amusing the two dull Malcomb girls.

Her imagination was much too independent and

severe an entity to be thus ruled. It chagrined her with an awkward, silent man, who seemed too big for his clothes. It appalled her with strong hands doing amazing things with the parade formation of knives and forks, and (worse) desperately conscious of them. These pictures she indignantly banished, but they slipped back, slyly.

Norman Boyd, who disliked her because she had pointedly left him in the middle of a dance once, noticed her unusual quietness.

"Dreaming of the socialist state, Eleanor?" he challenged across the table in a pleasant drawl. Eleanor's activities furnished great amusement to her friends—to this particular crowd of them, at least. Boyd's voice attracted listeners, as it always did—heads turned in his direction, smiles in Eleanor's. She gave him back calmly.

"If I was, Norman, it was to cast you in the role of town crier."

This brought laughter at Boyd's expense. He leaned over and scrutinized Eleanor carefully.

"No, I was wrong" he declared. "It is not the social state you're building, Eleanor." He had half the table now, and turned to them impressively. "I see it in her eyes! She's found her soul-mate in a coal-heaver."

Eleanor felt herself go suddenly red, and her thoughts ran about for words like chicken after millet. Boyd instantly followed up.

"Yes—a great, strong, beautiful coal-heaver, with bows and arrows tattooed on his mighty arm, a smut

on his otherwise perfect nose—bearing himself with all the grace and dignity of a Percheron."

The table was listening in delight now, if not in sympathy—Norman Boyd's tongue seldom loosed itself against a person as armored as Eleanor. The post-eighteenth-amendment cocktails had warmed him to carelessness. He leaned still further over the table.

"Confess, Eleanor, confess—tell us all about the noble embodiment of American Labor." He waved his fork amid amused cries of "Hear, hear."

Eleanor looked at him steadily, with a gentle smile. She longed, for one passionate instant, for Bob, to smash the red cynical face with its hard little lines. He grinned a little alcoholically at her. She allowed a short silence to form. Then her words fell like snow-flakes on a hot griddle.

"In love with a coal-heaver, Norman? Perhaps I am. But—*if* I am, I've picked one that can support me—and himself."

"I never read about so many robberies as lately" clattered the hostess hastily. Gabbling sprang up swiftly, almost hysterically round the table. Norman Boyd had gone white with anger. His fame as a parasite rivalled Burns's "wee beastie." Eleanor picked up the conversation with Vermylia.

As the table broke up and the women drifted into the other room, Marian Allen fastened herself to Eleanor. Marian was five feet high; a Pomeranian of a woman, with an appalling sense of humor back of her solemn little face.

"I've thought of something too marvellous" she said. "Norman Boyd's little quip for you put it into my head. Why don't you bring one of your workmen to a dinner? I'll give it."

Eleanor turned an outraged face on her. "Marian, you're mad—why it would be cruel as—" suddenly she changed, and a smile broke out merrily. "Any sort of a workman?"

Marian nodded rapidly. "Yes any sort. Preferably big and rather tough. You must know someone you can get—it would be gorgeous."

"Will you be nice to him?"

"My dear, if he is in the least attractive, I shall make love to him. Now then, will you?"

"Yes. I'll call you up about it."

When she reached home, she found in her room a flat package addressed to her, with "by hand" in one corner. The handwriting she did not know, but instantly guessed; a powerful, slanted hand, with tightly closed a's and o's. She opened the wrapping paper to find a single sheet of writing and a mounted photograph. The writing was brief.

"I never felt I could send you this before. Does it mean anything to you?

"Bob."

She picked up the photograph, and dropped suddenly into a chair. It was an enlargement of a snap-shot someone had taken of them together, on one of the convalescent walks through the breath-

less beauty of the spring. Behind, a low grey wall —farther back three poplars, melancholy ghosts of trees, stole across the picture. Above them, a sheen of new leaves glimmered mistily.

The smell of earth rushed to her as she looked, and the rustle of the poplar leaves, like myriad fairy palms rubbing dryly together, and the bittersweet, acrid smell of smoke from a peasant cottage near. She put her hand to her throat, and through the haze of memories looked at the man in the picture, at herself—a strange, trim, debonair self, a slim pagan in khaki. Her face was thinner, the eyes bigger. His she could not see plainly (though the photograph was clear enough), for round it was cast the high, sweet, slightly mad romance which to feminine America hung like an aura about the uniform of the A. E. F.

She looked long at the picture, then, with a little sigh, set it up on her desk, and, crossing the room absently, buried her nose in the golden roses as she thoughtfully kicked off first one slipper and then the other.

CHAPTER XVII

BARRIERS

AS the day drew near for the concert, Raleigh began living in a continual performance of rehearsals, re-writing of parts, coaching of stolid men, cajoling, keeping up a certain flagging interest that is inevitable where forty amateurs are concerned. And it took the tact of a Gladstone.

"You would scream with delight at one of my rehearsals" he wrote to Harold Van Doran, whom he had left industriously painting in New York. "It's a sort of potpourri thing I'm trying to do. They adore minstrels, so that is most of it, but I have managed to insinuate a straight quartet or two. The other night in the middle of 'Deep River' by the picked quartet, Giovanni, the second tenor, seized his forelock and screamed, jumped up and down, and began spouting Italian like one of his greater prototypes at the Metropolitan. I finally got him calmed enough to ask what was the matter. He pointed a quivering finger at Moran, an Irishman with a good bass voice. 'I canna seeg wit heem' he howled. 'He make a da face—like a dees'. Moran's

choleric blue eye began to blaze, and I came between them just in time. He does look rather like a dyspeptic goldfish when he sings. It's glorious fun, but I shall retire to a rest cure when it's over . . . You inquire with unseemly eagerness, it appears to me, about Peggy and Eleanor; Eleanor is the sort you know—charming, intelligent, very lovely looking. We've been together a great deal lately. She's stimulating and has a fine mind, and yet I sometimes feel she's too—too—I don't know what. I miss something. Or I think I do. You know my mania for 'understanding' people. That's where Peggy comes in. She is intuitive as a little prophetess, and has a basic love of music that's very real, and that Eleanor, with all her mind, hasn't. However, Peggy hasn't a lot that Eleanor has. Oh damn—I'm getting more and more in a muddle about them. Probably you'll hear that I have eloped with one and am being sued for breach of promise by the other. Give my best to the bunch. Tell Chapin Luther I'm reverting to type, have gained fifteen pounds of muscles; and affect chewing tobacco and a truck-driver haircut. It will doubtless send him scuttling to the first train out here to see the phenomena . . ."

The day before the concert, Raleigh hurried out of the shop at three fifteen, his mind industriously purusing the rhythm of his Shop Chanty, and rendering him deaf to a light voice that called his name. Then a clear whistle sounded above the voices of the men. He registered the melody rather absently,

then his head flung up. "Who in the devil would know *that* tune?"

He saw Eleanor Grayson leaning from the window of her car, drawn to the curb, and hurried to her with a delighted smile.

"You must have been centuries away" she said. "I've been calling with the regularity of a cuckoo. Please get in—we're going to begin the decorating of the Welfare Building for tomorrow night. Mr. Parker has asked me to help, and almost put me in charge of it. I want your advice. I've gotten some of the girls from the office—it's the sort of thing everyone should feel that they've done something with, you know, and I thought it would be nice to ask Miss McGill. Do you know where she lives?"

"Yes, of course."

Eleanor raised an eyebrow at him. " 'Of course' sounds as if you had made it Mecca, Dan."

Raleigh blushed. "What nonsense—naturally I've been out there, knowing Fred so well. They're a great bunch together. I'm very fond of them—Mrs. McGill is a bit of the heroic age—a large bit, I might say—transplanted."

"How do you like the other brother, Bob?"

Raleigh glanced sidewise at her. The tone was curiously impersonal. He grinned.

"Yes, I wanted to ask you about that, young lady. I saw him holding your hand at the Wycherlys'." Eleanor had turned a bright pink "Now fess up—what 'ave you been doing?"

Eleanor laughed silverly. "I met him in France,

you know. I hadn't seen him since. I didn't even know he was living here."

"Oh." He settled back. "I see. He's a curious chap—very strong, very compressed, some way. I'm fond of him. We've seen something of each other since that Sunday we nearly went over the cliff. We began with violent dislike—he is really the type that bores me, usually—very practical, very common sense, very industrious, and not much sense of humor. You know?" He was talking lightly out of the window, and missed the twitch of Eleanor's gloved hand on the wheel, and the sudden compression of her lips. He went on musingly. "And yet, in spite of that, I like him. He has magnetism of a sort that is intensely strong. I think he likes me, too; though originally I'm sure he considered me a vile and arrant butterfly masquerading insolently as an ant. How did you meet him abroad?"

She told him, with important omissions.

Raleigh directed her to the McGill house. She regarded it with a curious interest. It looked like thousands of other houses, brown and frame and of an architecture that deposits a dreadful burden upon the dwellers within if they would achieve any sort of individuality about their home. Somehow the little house had achieved it. It glowed with a kind of snug comfort.

Peggy came flying out, at Raleigh's vociferous summons. Eleanor greeted her smilingly.

"We want you to help decorate the hall with us for the concert. You can come, can't you? We're

going downtown to get materials, and then going to run back to the Welfare Building."

"Sure," replied Peggy, eagerly. She ran back for her hat and coat. Bob came round the corner of the house in a big sweater that emphasized his tapering torso and wide shoulders, and made his square face seem squarer still. Raleigh, leaning outside the motor, waved him over. He hesitated, then came forward.

His face flushed when he saw Eleanor, and Raleigh, watching, saw his eyes deepen. Raleigh lifted mental eyebrows.

This time Eleanor, protected by a third person, was her own self.

"Oh, how do you do Bob?" They shook hands. "Can't you come with us? We're going to decorate the Welfare Building for Dan's concert. Why don't you come too?"

Bob's face lighted—then he looked at Eleanor, as she sat at the wheel, easy, smiling, and his face set subtly.

"No," he said quietly. "I can't, I'm afraid. There's some things I have to do here. Anyhow, I'd be no good for that sort of thing. Dan's the boy for that" he smiled at Raleigh and laid an arm across his shoulder—a rare demonstrativeness for the taciturn Bob. Raleigh protested.

"Nonsense—come along. I'll make you do all sorts of things, or rather, Eleanor will—she's the boss. Why don't you?"

Bob looked again at the slim figure at the wheel,

and glanced at the low car, with its special body and smooth, gray velvet cushioning, He shook his head. Eleanor was watching him, conscious again of the curious inward agitation he always brought her.

Peggy danced out of the house, and Raleigh hurried to her. Bob bent quickly toward Eleanor.

"Will you go to the theatre with me some night this week?" he asked. He had seen her just once since their first afternoon at her house—a once of restraint and difficulty so keen that both sighed with relief when the evening had been over. Yet he knew he must see her.

Eleanor thought swiftly. Of course, it made no difference, really, what her friends thought . . . she saw a picture of Norman Boyd's delighted face meeting them in the foyer . . . She kicked her imagination and her conventionality vehemently.

"Of course—I'd love to" she said. "Any night you like. Just call me up." She smiled upon him with a warmth that sent his heart pounding into his throat. Peggy and Raleigh climbed chattering into the machine. With a swift smile, she shot the car into gear and raced off with a speed that was almost abruptness. Bob remained standing on the curb where they had left him, bathed still in the ecstatic warmth of Eleanor's smile.

Peggy was looking at Eleanor with astonished eyes. "Why—I didn't know that you knew Bob" she said.

"Didn't you? We met in France, when he was

convalescing . . . will you take the wheel, Dan? I've been going all day, and I'm tired."

They fell into a discussion of decorative plans, Peggy listening appreciatively, a little bewildered.

"I think crepe paper streamers and colored sheets of paper will solve it" said Raleigh, directing his attention unconsciously to Eleanor. "I did a big bare studio that way once. The Welfare Building is a barn of a place."

"Blue and pink would be good colors" said Peggy helpfully.

Eleanor made a little *moue* to herself. "I'm afraid they would not be strong enough, would they?" she asked.

"Oh no—never do." This from Raleigh. He shut his eyes in an agony of concentration. The car leaped, and grazed a pushcart. Both girls shrieked. Eleanor grabbed the wheel.

"For heaven's sake, if you must shut your eyes, don't do it when you're turning a corner" cried Eleanor indignantly. Raleigh smiled imperturbably.

"If we get purple and blue and apple green, with a little crimson and orange—and black—lots of it—black paper and gold and black paint, that'll fix it beautifully. Will you drop me at the Y? I want to get some pictures of that studio I decorated. Also a bath."

"You're still at the Y?" asked Eleanor, a twinkle in her eye.

"Oh Lord, yes. Stokes crawled down to one of my rehearsals the other day and held my hand for

fifteen minutes afterward. Do tell Peggy—it would amuse her. See you in half an hour." He dashed into the building.

They found him waiting at the door with a small, pale, and obviously embarrassed lad. Raleigh led him forward.

"Found Smetana—thought he'd be useful—we might gild him and put him up for a cupid over the stage." He introduced..

Smetana lifted his great eyes to Eleanor's lovely face, and grovelled, instantly, as had his ancestors to certain ladies on white horses, with tall coiffes and misty veils. He was speechless.

Raleigh shoved him in good naturedly. "Can we make it? Peggy, you'll have to sit on Eleanor's lap, if I'm to drive. Smetana can squeeze into the corner, between the packages." They sped out to the shop with the darkness falling upon them.

"Too bad not to have daylight to work by" said Peggy.

"No—it's better this way. We want our effect for artificial light, you know." They pulled up before the Welfare Building, offensively new, and, laden with packages, marched in. He led the way to the great hall on the second floor. This was a huge room, with a rather fine simplicity. Broad windows the height of a man's shoulder from the floor flooded it with sunlight in daytime. Round posts in a wide double row divided it lengthwise, as into nave and side-aisles. At one end, the stage, at the other, small dressing rooms. The floor was polished

wood and the general tinting a neutral lemon gray of rough plaster.

They found Parker and half a dozen girls standing in the exact middle of the hall, and looking round it. They had their arms full of Fourth-of-July bunting. Parker hurried to Eleanor.

"How do you do, Miss Grayson? Find Raleigh, did you? That's right." He was voluble and perspiring. "I thought that it would be a fine plan to run borders of pennants, er—the felt ones, you know, from pillar to pillar, and round the top of the wall in scallops, perhaps?"

"That would be pretty" said Peggy, a little doubtfully.

Raleigh waited. ("Pennants in this place will make it look exactly like flypaper—or a polka-dot dress" he thought.)

Eleanor smiled soothingly at him; smooth sentences flowed round him; Raleigh's pictures were produced, and presently Parker somewhat reluctantly relinquished the pennants.

There followed a wild half hour of cutting, fitting, of rough measurements and gauged distances. Smetana was sent scuttling for tall stepladders. The girls cut paper crepe under Eleanor's direction into ordained shapes, and fitted colored paper together. Chaos grew, and the room looked more and more like a battlefield of cubism. An hour passed.

Peggy stood before Raleigh, handing him black cardboard and orange crepe paper. He was perched

atop a tall ladder, coatless and perspiring, his long legs dangling. He looked down absently.

"How do you make those Strozzi lanterns?" He asked. "I've forgotten the shape."

"Those what?" asked Peggy. "I don't know what you mean."

He rumpled his hair. "Oh, never mind. Eleanor —" he called across the hall to her—"do you remember the Strozzi lanterns?"

She came over. "Oh, you can't make those, Dan. They're much too intricate. Don't you remember—eightsided things with tall spikes bending out at the top of them." She looked up at the wall bracket of three electric lights meditatively. "Wait a moment —do you remember those huge sconces in the Cathedral of Pisa—black, I think, with gold on them?"

"Oh rather! I was there when they were having a funeral. It was marvellous."

Eleanor shivered. "I'll never forget the Misericordia. One night they went past our pension—I think someone had died just down the street—and it seemed to me that for months I dreamed of black-robed masked men and flaming torches."

"It's the most Italian thing in Italy" declared Raleigh. He looked down eagerly, his arms full of forgotten decorations. "Were you in Rome the time that . . ."

Eleanor leaned against the stepladder, nodding, her face vivid, looking up at him. They roamed the slopes of the Janiculum together, and climbed the de-

caying ramparts of the Coliseum. Peggy looked from one to the other, listening, her eyes resting longest on Raleigh's eager face; every plane of it was becoming an intimately familiar thing to her; the curves of the spare chin and jaw; the very deep indentation of the eyes; the "Michaelangelo's bar" of fullness about the eyebrows, as it is known to sculptors—the bar that means sense-keeness, and potential artistry.

They talked on and on. Peggy watched and listened for a time, then her smile faded slowly, and it was with a very thoughtful mien that she crossed the hall and began cutting paper with Smetana. He looked at her vaguely and smiled. Peggy did not see it.

The work went on, and presently some sort of order began to emerge from the chaos. It was Raleigh's plan to make one of each unit of design that he planned to use, so that next day, when he was at work, they could be duplicated by the girls.

He had massed blue, purple and green crepe paper at the top of one of the pillars to give it the elaborate, fruited and garlanded capital of the Renaissance. Gilt paint and a touch of orange completed the illusion. Then he "marbled" the column with gold and black paint and a feather snatched secretly from Eleanor's hat, and recognized with shrieks of indignation. The wall brackets, by the use of flaring black cardboard designs and crimson crepe paper, turned into long triple sconces bearing torch flames.

He had already attached to the ceiling round one

of the big cluster lights the strips that were to be Venetian lanterns, when the door opened, and Parker, who had, after twenty minutes of benevolent uselessness, departed, came prancing forward. Raleigh nearly fell off the ladder, for behind him was David Harde. Eleanor saw him too, and glanced quickly at Raleigh. He put his fingers to his lips, and promptly hid his head inside the circle of papers, dangling from the ceiling.

Peggy, sitting on the floor cutting a sconce, had her back to the door. She had been lecturing Smetana, who had grown excited about the decoration.

"Why dey do all dees?" he had asked. "Why dey not geev more pay?" Not for nothing had Mengles, strolling through the craneyard, poured words into the boy's impressionable mind. "All dees—spen' for nutting——"

"Nonsense" retorted Peggy rather sharply. "Just stop and think, will you? This won't come to $600 food and all, when it's all done, likely. Just you figure out what that would amount to split up among the pay of three thousand men. It wouldn't buy you chewing gum, any of you, and this——"

She was struck to silence by the change in the other's face. The childlike petulance had died out of it, leaving it for an instant blank and dead. Then the eyes began to burn dully, and something stirred behind them. He stared over Peggy's shoulder, with such a stamp of fear and hatred that she whirled. There was only Parker coming in, followed by a tall, springy man with white hair and a youngish face.

She turned back to Smetana. It seemed to her that red fires leaped at the back of his eyes. They were slightly glazed.

She shook his shoulder.

"What's the matter with you?" she cried in a low tone, her own face white. There was a strangeness about him as evil as poison for a moment.

The boy started, winced, and looked at her. His eyes focused back slowly to nearly normal, but continued to flicker like a dying fire. He stumbled to his feet, and went toward the door like a blind man, shuffling uncertainly, but never taking his eyes from the group around the ladder. Parker was just saying "Here's Mr. Harde, Miss Grayson." Smetana looked for a long moment at the back of the tall figure. There was no mistake—it was the man of the motor car. He slipped out of the hall.

David had tweaked the back of Eleanor's hair. She whirled with surprise, and her face lighted.

"Why David—playing about like this? Why aren't you in the office at work, young man?" She always twitted him about his devotion to his desk. He loved it.

"Playing? Don't you think I ever eat, young woman? Do you know that it's a quarter of six?" His eyes travelled up the ladder to the legs atop them. The head and shoulders were veiled by a rain of colored crepe paper.

"Who's your interior decorator?" he asked Parker aside.

Parker beamed, and assumed the proprietary expression of the teacher with a prize pupil.

"That's Raleigh, that I told you of. I want you to meet him and see what you think of him."

David nodded gravely. He grinned faintly with the corner of his mouth away from Parker at Eleanor. Parker called—a little pompously.

"Oh Raleigh—come down a minute, will you?"

Raleigh's voice floated down from the bower of paper.

"Just a moment, Mr. Parker. I'm trying to decide whether orange or crimson paper would be best to go round the bulbs. The whole history of decorative art is called into judgment."

David exploded into a violent cough.

Parker's tone crisped with impatience. He knew how well David Harde liked to be kept waiting.

"That's all right—that's all right—you can fix that later. Come here."

"I cannot fix it later. The mood is broken," intoned the voice tragically. "However, I yield to the rod of authority." The legs agitated themselves, and Raleigh's face, innocent eyed, appeared between the streamers of paper. He looked at Harde in naive surprise.

"Oh I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't know someone was waiting for me." He swarmed down the ladder. The scandalized Parker introduced him as "Raleigh, of whom I spoke to you, Mr. Harde."

Raleigh's eyes were dancing. "I beg pardon? The name? I didn't get the name."

"This is Mr. Harde." Parker's voice struggled between exasperation and reverence.

"Oh yes. Very glad to meet you, Mr. Harde." They shook hands gravely. Raleigh's composure was, of the two, perhaps more perfect.

"How long have you been here?" asked David Harde, in the impersonal, not unkind tone he kept for employees. It passed far beneath Raleigh's blithe head.

"About two and one half months. How long have you?"

Parker's eyes popped open like a china doll's, and his whole fringe of hair rose in horror.

"Mr. Harde is the president of the company" he got out, trying not to choke, while Eleanor turned away hastily, and even Harde's poker face turned a shade pinker.

"Oh"—Raleigh stared at him with delight. "Are you really? Then you must like it awfully, don't you —sir?" he added as an afterthought.

David preserved his gravity by an effort that nearly rent his diaphram in two.

"Yes, I like it." He had a wholesome fear of Raleigh's humor, and galloped on rather hastily. "This is going to look fine, but you'll never get it through tonight."

Raleigh continued to stare at him like a fascinated child. "No—I know that, sir. I'm making a model of each one. Then Miss Grayson and her cohort can finish the rest tomorrow."

David Harde looked appreciatively at the pillar's

paper capital, where the shades of color cunningly presented a fine illusion of deep bas-relief. "You'd better take tomorrow off and go ahead with it yourself" he said.

Raleigh bowed like a butler, and folded his hands in front of him. "Yes, sir" he said. "Will I get paid as usual, sir?"

David choked. "Oh yes—tell Culhane you're on special duty." He turned to Eleanor. "Just remember that you are going to the theatre with me tonight" he said, with a twinkle, "and don't stay here too late." He nodded and strode down the room, satellited by Parker.

Raleigh spoke loudly and quickly to Eleanor.

"Isn't he nice! He can't be the president, though. He hasn't the presidential shape. They always look like Zeppelins." He saw Parker's bald spot turn purple. The door closed upon them. Raleigh leaned against the ladder and roared.

"Come along, Dan," said Eleanor, finally. "I must go home right away. I really forgot about the theatre with David, the old dear."

When they left, Smetana had vanished. Raleigh hurried round the building, bawling his name. "Little rascal" he said. "I told him we'd take him home."

Peggy went up to him. "Dan" she said seriously, "I don't like that boy. I'm afraid of him."

Raleigh's eyebrows went up.

"Afraid? Why? He's a pathetic little creature, but certainly nothing to terrify even a violet."

Peggy shook her head. She told him of what had happened. "His eyes were awful—it seemed just like there was something in them—I don't know how to say it—something that wasn't him at all."

Raleigh sobered suddenly in the midst of a chuckle, as the memory of Smetana's expression the first day he had seen him, returned to his mind.

"I know what you mean" he returned slowly. "He's a highstrung, sensitive little soul, and has suffered terribly over the death of that cousin of his. He's introspective and morbid—but nothing to be afraid of."

Peggy remained unconvinced. "You didn't see him as I did" she returned. "I'm glad he likes you." She shivered.

They joined Eleanor at the door. She turned to look back at the hall.

"Really—it's going to look stunning. You've caught the Renaissance air. I wouldn't be surprised to see Petrarch walk out on the stage, laurel wreath and all, and begin reciting a sonnet."

"Or Benvenuto Cellini claim the silver work on the radiators, I suppose."

She laughed appreciatively. "Don't you love the place in the autobiography where he sneaks out of the Cardinal's window?"

"Isn't it delicious? And the awful affairs with the wife of . . ."

A wistful look crept round Peggy's merry mouth. It deepened as they entered the motor, and when Raleigh tucked the robe about her with a more than

brotherly pat, she found an absurd lump in her throat. She looked at Eleanor and Raleigh, and suddenly saw them on one side of a tremendous gulf, and herself on the other side. As if to vocalize her thought, Raleigh spoke dreamily out of a little silence.

"Eleanor—aren't those lights, with their halo of mist, like a Monet picture? Which one is it, that has such extraordinary blues and purples—of a bridge at twilight . . ."

Peggy pressed her cheek against the cold glass of the motor, and in its discreet darkness cried silently.

. . . . . .

Smetana had waited till David Harde went out. He had shrunk into the darkness by the door as he passed with Parker. The men did not even see him. In that moment, when David had passed so close that he could see the vigorous strength of his black eyebrows and the lines around his chin, it seemed to Smetana that the spinning whir of his mind had risen to a shriek that blasted it into hot silver, a molton blare of white sound, a convergence like the sun condensed into a burning-glass; a point of argent intensity . . . It filled the whole world with light —a light through which galloped and clattered gigantic machines, that grew small and whizzed like incandescent flies into the point of light . . .

He found himself at the foot of the stairs. He

walked out into the night, unseeingly. There was a new and sudden peace that he gulped in with gasps of breath. His mind no longer spun. It had found its centre.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOWING DISCORD

THE opening night of the Welfare Building, though successful as an event, failed in its deeper purpose. Too many men, awkward and starched and glazed of collar, had stood about the sides of the floor watching the dancing, with grim comments little meant for the ears they eventually reached.

"What they want to have a dance hall for?" asked one, a sulky, pale youth, with the eyes and mouth of a satyr. "Nobuddy wants to high-ball out to this man's place to dance."

"Yeah—I'll bet they make a hunk o' gold off'n that new restaurant downstairs, too."

"Why don't they add sumpin onto our pay, stead o' puttin up this dump?"

A slightly older man joined the group—Mengles, of the smooth chin and even smoother tongue. "Never mind, boys" he purred. "We'll be asking anything we want and getting it, pretty soon. Just stick around and watch, that's all—just stick around and watch."

Thus Mengles, agitator *in parvulo.*

"Huh? What yer mean?"

Mengles glanced around. "Tell you later," he said. "But if you hear of a shop meeting some day next week, don't be surprised." He walked away, light of step, smiling and nodding here and there.

But these currents, deep as they were, quite vanished beneath the froth of the evening. The concert scored an amazing success. It was a complete surprise to most. Raleigh, keenly guaging his very mixed audience, had guided the program from the wild extremes of farcical minstrels with Gargantuan jests and slapstick puns, to a picked quartet doing a group of old folk-songs that left the hall silent for a moment. His own song had capped a growing enthusiasm. Cracked out by forty lusty, well-trained voices, gripping with the stir of the old music, original, but "catchy" to a degree, it finished off the program to a tapping of feet and roars of approval.

Raleigh became the hero of the dance that followed, and his name spread broad-cast through the shops, "Rosy Raleigh—you know, the big good-lookin' kid with the smile. Boy, that lad can jazz a piano, now believe me—yea, that's him—the bird that fought Mulgully." Men hummed snatches of the "Hot-press Chanty" and envied the men of the hot-press.

If Raleigh went about the shop, men grinned at him who would have laughed three months before, because they now respected him in their own terms

of nerve, and admired him as frankly above them in certain ways, with no "airs" about it. Thus had certain of them loved their officers. And so, quite unaccountably, the stamp of permanency was put upon Raleigh, and he was accepted by the men as one of those who naturally will go ahead,—was taken as a natural leader—of which he was sublimely unconscious. When Culhane told him that the General Manager wanted to speak to him, he wondered, but went directly to the G.M.'s office.

Norton, looking him up and down from behind cool, light-rimmed glasses, offered him two jobs—one in the sales department, the other in the engineering—his choice of which ever end of the game appealed to him.

"You've evidently been educated," he said sharply, boring into Raleigh's smiling calm with small grey gimlet eyes. "And you can get right along."

Raleigh, lounging gracefully in his wet shirt, the veins on his arms and neck tracing a gladiatorial pattern, shook his head.

"That's very kind of you," he replied. "But I'd much prefer to remain where I am."

Norton stared. "But you can't do that," he snapped, "you've got too much intelligence. We can use that elsewhere, and put another man with much less brain at your work." It offended Norton's crisp tabulation of efficiency, like using a Toledo blade to pare potatoes.

"Don't over-estimate my brain because I speak correctly and know a Chopin waltz from a Sousa

march, Mr. Norton," smiled Raleigh. "I'm much better where I am."

Norton was irritated. "Haven't you any ambition? Don't you want to get ahead?"

"Not in your way, probably. My own development, as it happens, is progressing sufficiently—much better than it could possibly do over sales sheets or blue prints. There has been no complaint of my work in the shops, I think. Moreover, I am happy in my friends there, and I have no assurance that such would be true elsewhere." (It flowed with the smoothness of olive oil.)

Norton started, and stared. Here was a man, apparently, in whom the golden sandals of preferment awakened nothing but faint repulsion. He felt like Roberts, Raleigh's erstwhile foreman, when Raleigh had shaken hands with him the first morning. Things like this just were not done.

Then his phone rang, and he turned to it with a curt nod.

"All right—that's all" he snapped. Raleigh bowed, a trifle exaggeratedly, it is to be feared, and went out. He looked down at his muscle-rippled arms and swelling chest; he thought of the advance he had made with his music, of McGill and his warm friendship, and the elemental loyalty it stood for, and laughed. Sales sheets and white collars, and playing the deferential gentleman, if need arose, to someone he despised! He realized he was very happy, without quite realizing why.

Raleigh left the shop that evening alone. McGill

was on night shift, and none of his particular cronies seemed about when he stuffed his overalls into his locker and scrambled into street clothes. As he swung down the way leading to the trolley, a tall man fell into step casually beside him, and spoke.

"That was a fine concert you gave the other night, Mr. Raleigh. Those men sang splendidly."

Raleigh glanced at the speaker in pleased surprise. He did not recognize him—but his circle of acquaintances in the huge population of the shops was comparatively small.

"Yes," he answered. "They did very well. Most of them are foreigners, you know, and the older nations somehow gift most of their children with music."

The other nodded gravely. "Been long in the shops?"

"About three months now."

"Like it pretty well?"

Raleigh beamed. "Oh, I'm crazy about it! The work isn't hard, once you get used to it, and it gives you all kinds of time in the afternoon, getting off this way at 3:30. And I've made some splendid friends in the shops."

"How does the pay suit you?"

The question rather surprised him. Funny old chap, he thought. "Oh, fine" he replied. "I feel rather like a robber, though" he added, "when I think how it compares to the salaries of college professors and newspaper men and such. And I hear

talk about a strike for more, and a recognition of the unions. It's absurd."

Grabler's eyes narrowed. Not so simple, this.

"Then you're not for having the unions recognized, I take it?" He remarked casually.

"Not *much*—when it would mean a strike, and the men as contented and well treated as they are here. It seems absolute tyranny to me to have a union step in, raise a row, and tell the employers whom they can hire and the men whom they can work for. Let anyone join if he wants to—that's all right—but why force men to?" He checked himself, remembering his uncle's first warning.

"But then—everyone has a right to his own opinion on those things."

("There's no doubt about yours, my young friend," thought Grabler grimly, and changed his tack.)

"Too bad more people can't see what fine chaps the foreigners are" he ventured, as they drew near the crowd waiting for a car.

Well baited, Raleigh swallowed hook and leader. He flamed. "Lord—I get crazy about that!" he exclaimed, laughing frankly at his own enthusiasm. "They've got what Americans lack—feeling, emotions, and latent artistic capacity. It makes me mad all over to hear some ignorant fool not half as fine-strung as they sneer at them as 'wops' and 'polaks'—as if Palestrina wasn't a wop and Chopin a polak."

Grabler nodded in feigned understanding, cleverly.

"I know. Those men in your concert are all fine fellows—all leaders of their own countrymen, too. You—they seemed to like you very much."

Raleigh expanded. "They do, really, I think" he confided engagingly. "I've taken the trouble to get to know them, and I'm very fond of them. They'd do anything for me, I think."

Abruptly Grabler focused. "I am greatly interested in the foreign question" he proferred smoothly, "and in the men of your shop, on account of your concert. Suppose I had a scheme to better them, and wanted the support of you and those leaders of yours—could I count on it?'"

Raleigh gazed at him in surprise, and for the first time studied him carefully—the clean shaved face, the curiously scarred cheek—the white hair, the graceful, well-dressed figure. "Nice old philanthropist in disguise, mingling with the proletariat," he thought —and yet—the man's eyes were not those of a philanthropist.

"Why certainly" he said aloud. "What can I do?"

Grabler smiled a rare smile. "Nothing yet. But I may address the men of your shop some day soon, and advocate some measures of interest for the men —especially the foreigners. I'd like you to pledge me your support, and that of your crowd when the time comes. Can I count on it?"

Raleigh laughed. "Makes me feel like a combination of Sherlock Holmes and Bernard Shaw," he said, " but you can count on us, all right, if it's some-

thing good for the foreigners. May I ask your name?"

The other hesitated only an instant. "My name is Grabler," he said gravely. Then, as the trolley came thundering to a stop and the men began piling on, he held out his hand. "Remember, I'm counting on you to speak to your men and have them predisposed to meet my suggestions. I shall address one of the shop meetings—probably next Thursday."

Raleigh nodded, still mystified, but was drawn into the seething eddy of grimy men struggling to board the trolley before he could reply. He wedged to a place on the platform, intensely interested, wondering. Perhaps the old chap was going to donate a night school for foreigners, and was going to lecture about it in the shops. He must talk it up to Mesanyov and the rest of his songsters, he thought. Then he fell to thinking of a quartet that he was framing, and promptly forgot the old philanthropist and all he had said.

Grabler watched the trolley a moment, then turned smiling, back to wait for Mengles. His eyes grew deep for a moment, then he laughed.

"The young fool" he thought. It had been easier than he expected.

CHAPTER XIX

TABLE-MANNERS

ELEANOR met him at the door; her eyes sparkling above her fur. They climbed into the waiting limousine and settled back with mutual chuckles.

"You didn't tell me much about this" he said as they swung down the drive. "I gathered that I was to appear in the role of the Stalwart Son of Toil. Shall I eat with my knife and spit into the fireplace?"

Eleanor grimaced. "I think the former will be all that is required," she returned. "But you can muddle the forks and say 'ain't' to your heart's content. It's going to be a gorgeous party. Every one is simply crazy with curiosity to see what I will produce."

"What in the world started it all?"

"Norman Boyd teased me the other night about my work, and it gave Marian Allen the idea that it would be a great lark if I brought one of the men from the shop to the next dinner. So she arranged the party."

"I've a package of chiclets" he announced. "I

shall chew gum in seven different rhythms, one for every course of the dinner."

They entered the great house a little late; most of the guests had already arrived. At the door Eleanor whispered, "You might start the atmosphere in the men's room. I'll meet you at the foot of the stairs."

The door opened, a solemn butler bowed them in.

"I'll start it right now" he whispered back. He seized the butler's hand and shook it effusively.

"Awful glad to see you" he said genially. Eleanor choked and fled to the stairs. The butler gasped. Then he stiffened. Really—it was a little too much —before prohibition people often shook his hands at parting—but to come to a dinner already primed —it was what one might expect of green whiskey. He pompously waved a commanding hand to the stairs.

"*Gentlemen* upstairs and straight back" he intoned.

"Huh? Oh sure—I get yuh." Raleigh marched leisurely up the stairs, with gapes at the pictures and hangings.

He found half a dozen men smoking and lounging about. Evidently he was expected, for every eye turned on him as he entered.

"Evening, gents" he cried gayly, tossing hat and coat on the bed. There were muttered and astonished greetings. A somewhat older man stared intently at him without a change of expression; one middle-sized youngster, with pink hair and glasses returned his smile with an embarrassed nod. Others

grinned at each other covertly. A thin-faced man, lined lightly about the eyes and with thin curling lips and hair brushed tightly to his skull, looked at him with his hands in his pockets and took no trouble to conceal a light sneer.

"Norman Boyd" thought Raleigh.

He pulled a loose cigarette from his pocket and fumbled for a match. The room had grown a little awkward—to all save Raleigh. He could have shouted with delight. He walked with a slight swagger to Boyd, and leaned toward his smoking cigarette.

"How's chances for a light?" he asked, and without waiting for a reply, seized Boyd's hand in his own (whereon he had carefully left a slight ingrain of dirt) and pressed the end of the cigarette against his own.

Boyd flushed, and endured it with lifted eyebrows. Raleigh nodded jerkily at him.

"Don't mention it" said Boyd acidly, and turned his back. There was a little silence. Raleigh stood alone, the others grouped round the fireplace. The awkwardness grew. Then the pink-haired man suddenly walked across the room to Raleigh with a slight defiance visible in the tilt of his head.

"You're a friend of Miss Grayson's aren't you?" he asked in a pleasant light voice. He smiled with a rather large curly mouth, and drew forth a cigarette from a case.

"May I trouble you for a light?" he asked with great distinctness.

Raleigh's mouth twitched. The older man smiled slowly and turned round.

"Sure" returned Raleigh.

"My name's Huggins" said the pink-haired boy, holding out his hand. Raleigh slapped his into it with the gesture that in the movies registers intense masculinity bordering on toughness. It almost rocked the smaller man off his feet. Raleigh looked into his eyes, pleasant greenish eyes behind their glasses, and instantly liked him. "A real person" he said to himself. "Glad to meet yuh" he grinned. "My name's Raleigh—Dan Raleigh."

It broke the tension. The others moved about and talked among themselves.

Raleigh smoked a while in silence, then tossed his cigarette into the fire.

"Well—I gotta go down in a minute" he said. He drew forth a small knife and manicured his nails elaborately. "Miss Grayson told me to meet her down there, and that lady don't want to be kept waitin', I believe."

He swaggered out.

He could not resist the temptation to linger in the dim hall outside the door. He heard a gust of laughter from within, and a pleasant drawl.

"That's right, Dicky—be the good Samaritan."

"Oh rats!" highly and explosively. "We all acted like cads—stared at him like something out of a zoo. I was just trying to make it a little easier for the chap. I like him. Of course he's crude——"

"Goodlookin' beggar." This in a deep voice that

Raleigh placed as the older man's. "Clothes all right too—look like Brooks Brothers to me, 'cept for that damn watch chain an' the vaudeville collar."

Boyd's drawl cut it.

"Oh, those fellows sink every cent in clothes. They're making more than they ever did in their lives, and it goes to their heads. He'd have the brass to go to a first class tailor and demand a proper outfit. I think the chain places his taste about correctly."

There was a movement toward the door, and Raleigh fled precipitously down the hall. He put a chiclet in his mouth and began chewing, four four time, allegretto, with great gusto.

He found Eleanor in the hall below, with a small woman who turned up a face like a solemn little pansy to him.

"Mr. Raleigh, Mrs. Allen, our hostess." Eleanor managed a slightly anxious tone admirably.

Raleigh drove Mrs. Allen's rings into her fingers till she winced at his grip.

"Awful glad to see yuh," he beamed, between chews. Marian Allen looked up the length of him critically.

"Really, Eleanor, he's delightful." She was blithely impersonal about it; Raleigh might have been the rug.

"Aw gwan—ain't you the little kidder" guffawed he, with a kind of elephantine coyness.

The other men came down—they all moved into the drawing room. Raleigh blundered through in-

troductions like a puppy through a flower garden, leaving crushed fingers and stares in his wake. He insisted on shaking hands with every one individually. One beautifully gowned girl ignored his hand, and smiled very coldly. Raleigh maneuvered to stand innocently upon her train a few moments later. She moved off with a terrifying ripping of fabric. Raleigh leaped with clumsiness.

"Gosh, I'm awful sorry" he said "I didn't follow yer dress clear down onta the ground."

She bowed elaborately. "Oh, that is quite to be expected" she returned. Eleanor smiled behind her fan.

Dinner was announced. Marian placed him at her right, across from Norman Boyd. Huggins grinned at him encouragingly from down the table. Raleigh deliberately plumped into his chair, then seeing the others seating ladies, leaped up, and awkwardly pulled Eleanor's chair out.

Marian, reaching to adjust a candle, inadvertently upset a tall salt cellar. It poured a stream of salt into the seat of his chair. Instantly he turned to her, grinning.

"Can't catch me that way, m'am" he shot at her.

Even Boyd added an unwilling laugh to the general chorus.

Eleanor, looking sidewise at him, marvelled that anyone could be taken in. To be sure, he had plastered his light hair flat to his skull, but it gave a new sharpness and cleanness to his head. His tie was of

the sort that crawls as in shame under the eaves of a spreading collar. His watch chain might have anchored the Armada, and dangled a large charm in the form of a bejewelled hen regarding a topaz egg. But to her the stamp was so unmistakable in the flatness of his small ears and the set of his head. She began to worry a little.

But with the hor d'oeuvres her worry vanished. Raleigh attacked them with his salad fork, and a knife picked at random. Boyd's eyebrows shot up and his sneering smile spread.

Throughout the dinner, he continued. Before Marian's fascinated gaze, he piled a monument of gravy and bread atop a knife with great dexterity, and engulfed it with ease. Covert and awed glances of amusement flew about. Eleanor was finding it a little more difficult than she had imagined. Huggins, whom she barely knew, looked at her with badly concealed scorn, and turned sympathetic eyes on Raleigh. Others did likewise.

But their sympathy was wasted. Raleigh's sublime unconsciousness masked a keen enjoyment that threatened to send him continually into shouts of laughter. There was much wine. At the end of the dinner, he raised the finger bowl somewhat unsteadily, and drank it dry. He smacked his lips.

"Fine stuff" he said to the petrified Marian. "Hasn't got the kick of this, though" patting his glass.

They trooped into the parlor together. He managed a word with Eleanor.

"Am I doing all right?'

"Almost too well." There was a strain in her voice, and Raleigh saw that she was very white.

"Ellie" he had adopted her nickname "what in the world's the matter—are you sick?"

She rallied quickly. "Nothing—nothing at all. I have a little mite of a headache."

"We'll go home early" he said. "I'm bursting to tell you all the things Mrs. Allen said to me. I never was vamped before." The wine was singing in Raleigh, and he hummed a snatch of Tristan to himself.

"Give us a tune, Dick," commanded someone. Huggins shook his head. "Too many cocktails, George. It always goes right to my fingers."

Raleigh boisterously hailed him.

"Tickle the ole' ivories, kiddo" he cried. "I wanna dance." He clapped a hand to Huggins's shoulder, and hauled him to the piano. His own fingers were itching.

Huggins swung into one of the latest syncopations, the melody somewhat blurred by alcoholic omissions, but the time kept perfectly. Raleigh seized his diminutive hostess and whisked her out into the hall. They danced. Raleigh's head spun a little, and the music melted into his legs so that he fairly floated. At the end she looked up at him breathlessly.

"Why, you dance *beautifully!*" she cried.

"Sure" returned Raleigh calmly. "I like to swing 'em, now and then." His arms were still round her; she looked up at him with saucy lips.

"I didn't realize you were so tall" she was saying. "Really, I'm quite falling in love with you, Mr. Raleigh."

Raleigh stooped swiftly and kissed her—hard. Toward the end she struggled suddenly. Raleigh released her and looked down with a smile. Her eyes sparkled with anger.

"How *dare* you," she cried in a low voice. "I should have you put out of my house, at once, now, this minute." She stamped her small foot.

Raleigh stared at her blankly. "Huh? Why, that's what yuh wanted, wasn't it?"

Marian stared at him a moment with a look as blank as his own—not quite, for Raleigh's was artificial, and hers natural. Then she broke into a peal of laughter. "Really, you are an amazing person. Of course it's what I wanted." She was quite suddenly composed. "Now run in and take care of Miss Grayson, whom you should not have left. Kiss me again."

He did, perfunctorily.

He found Eleanor dancing with Boyd, read a signal in her eyes, and forgot his pose for a moment. He tapped Boyd's shoulder and calmly took Eleanor out of his arms.

"May I cut in?" he asked suavely, as they moved off together. Boyd stared. It didn't fit.

"I think we'll go" said Eleanor. "People are getting a little gay. And I really have a headache" she added as an afterthought.

Marian stopped them on the stairs. "Not *going*

Eleanor? My dear you simply can't. I've lost my heart to Mr. Raleigh." She twinkled at him outrageously.

"Yes—we must. You won't mind if I run away, will you Marian? I'm not feeling up to snuff, somehow, and" she smiled, "you know Mr. Raleigh has to get up at six."

"Aw, say, Miss Eleanor, don't let that cut no cheese" said Raleigh. He did not want to go at all. He was having far too good a time. He had shocked seven people since dinner and kissed his hostess ardently. But Eleanor shook her head, and he rather glumly telephoned to Peter.

When they came down, with wraps ready, it was to a more silent room. Several of the men were gathered at the door smoking, and on the stairs Raleigh caught, to his amazement, the opening chords of Chopin's A major Polonaise, chords that should crash with the clang of victorious army hoofs. They fell with tidy precision. It was a gladiator masquerading as a trained nurse. Raleigh ground his teeth, and leaped to the door. He saw the girl whose train he had all but amputated seated at the piano.

She missed the solo D that stands out like a beacon at the opening of the second movement. She slid uncertainly up the leaping stairway of chromatic octaves that mark its end. She stuttered in the burring bass of the finale, and fell between the A and A-flat of the last chord.

There was a polite patter of applause. Boyd turned to Raleigh.

"I suppose classical music doesn't mean anything to you," he drawled deliberately.

"It might if it was decently played." The musician in him—and the cocktails—stripped off his pose clean. He swung to Marian.

"May I play that for you?" he asked, and without waiting for an answer, crossed the room in three strides. He scooped cover, pictures, and music off the piano top with one gesture, and dumped them on a chair. He raised the piano lid, unconscious of the arrested movements in the room—the sudden tension. The only thing he was conscious of was a burning need to right an artistic wrong. He sat down at the piano and brought his hands down to the opening chords with a crash that drove the buzzing whispers to instant silence. He played through it like one inspired, piled the mounting, volcanic crescendo at the end, and finished to a stunned stillness that throbbed. He bolted to the door, seized Eleanor, grabbed his hat and overcoat, and they raced for the front door. Babel broke behind them. He slammed the door in the butler's face.

"I couldn't help it" he said breathlessly, when they were seated in the car. "It was too awful." He grew a little calmer. "I suppose it was mean to that girl—but she deserved it. I'm sorry if I've spoiled your bluff, but it was one too many."

Eleanor had not recovered speech. When she did, it was to laugh.

"They would have found it out sooner or later," she returned. "It was a marvellous exit."

It lifted for a moment the pain of the evening for her. Through Raleigh's exaggerated gaucheries, her busy imagination had threaded a bitter pattern of truth . . . Raleigh, a moment later, heard a small but distinct sob. In amazement he seized her hand.

"Ellie—whatever in the world——"

Eleanor gulped violently. "Oh—it's all right, Dan—it's nothing—n—nothing" to confirm it she cried dismally. His arm shot around her.

"Eleanor—dear—please tell me—is it anything I've——"

"Oh no, no—I'm just—things are so puzzling, Dan——"

Raleigh impulsively kissed her, but she shook her head, and pushed him away, gently. "No—Dan —please'" the voice was very quiet. Never had he touched her before.

"Oh—I'm sorry" his head was swirling with wonder. "Is there anything I can——"

"I'll tell you all about it some time—perhaps—it's really—I'm too silly . . ." She talked rapidly about the dinner, in a steadying voice, amusingly, with very small knowledge of what she was saying, during the rest of the drive. Raleigh, with increasing amazement but unbroken tact, followed her lead. He left her at the door, with a warm little pressure in his hand and a look out of her eyes that added to the growing bewilderment of his mind.

"My God—she can't be—" he checked himself. "Don't be a conceited ass, Rip" he told himself severely. But the thought came back. His playing—he had never played like that—perhaps it had awakened the depth that he sought continually under the cool charm of her . . .

He went to bed convinced that she had fallen in love with him, and more than half sure that he was with her.

CHAPTER XX

MENACE

SMETANA pushed the lever of his crane, high in the control box where he sat. The big arm ducked obediently; the three magnets chinked upon a girder, and presently the crane was travelling down the yard like a clumsy bird of prey.

Since the concert he had felt curiously at rest. It was as if a spring, long kept at vibrating tension, had relaxed. He no longer heard the dry whining of his mind. With the white scream that had focused it to a center on the day of his recognition of David Harde, a quiet peace had settled upon it. They—the giant shapes that had so long troubled him, no longer haunted. With the same instinct that caused the savage to deify wind and lightning, and so planted the first seed of religion, Smetana had personified the hated powers of the Hydraulic into queer Things—neither human nor mechanical, but children of an unholy union between the two. Vaguely, age-old, was the thought of sacrifice in his mind . . .

He smiled faintly to himself as he lowered the girder to its place and demagnetized the lifting mag-

nets with a little switch button. The noon whistle blew, and he ran the control box to the lateral girder of the frame, climbed out, and down a ladder to the ground. Mengles sauntered up opening a lunch box. Mengles had formed the habit of spending much of his noon hour with the boy. He flattered Mengles by the eagerness with which he listened to his socialism, a poison most of the men were healthy enough to withstand; like microbes in a strong body it made no infection. But in the cancerous mind of Smetana the germ leaped into distorted growth.

Mengles smiled his crooked smile at him and fingered his chin.

"Say—you know Raleigh purty well, don't you?" he began, as they seated themselves on a pile of iron and began eating their lunch.

Smetana nodded. "Yes. I sing in that concert," he hummed a phrase of the shop chanty in his high clear voice.

The older man bit off the end of a pickle meditatively.

"Well say—how about getting him to pass it around to the boys—that bunch o' yours in the concert—that when Grabler talks to 'em—in about a week now—that they're to eat up what he says? Raleigh ain't keen on the strike at all—he don't believe in no closed shop. Grabler talked to him, an' found that out in a hurry. He didn't let on tuh Raleigh who he was—just said he had a scheme for helpin' the men, an' mostly the furriners. He got Raleigh to promise he'd tip em off that Grabler had

the right dope. Well, he ain't done it. Will you tell him to?"

"Yes—I tell him." Smetana considered the other gravely. "But I want you do someting for me." He smiled craftily.

Mengles nodded, a little amused.

"Sure kid, if I can. What's the idea?"

"You know dem long thin piece of iron; dey was here de odder day—very sof', very wavy——"

"I get yuh. Stuff that looked like laths made out o' iron. Sure—I remember the stuff—what about it?"

Smetana did not reply at once. He was looking dreamily at the crane. Mengles, peering sharply into his face, experienced suddenly a coolness along his spine. Smetana spoke very gently.

"You have some of dem lef' here." He pointed to an open spot near them where several men stood watching the operation of a new and enormous barrel-press. Mengles who was sub-foreman of the crane yard, looked at him with surprise.

"What the hell do you want them for?"

Smetana's smile deepened.

"I want dem keep there—all time—for lil' while."

Mengles swore under his breath. Here was no strike agitation; here were forces far deeper. The look of Smetana's face puzzled him, and frightened him a little.

"Off'n that stuff" he said roughly, his slick exterior gone for a moment. "I ain't got no business leavin' them things there."

"You leave dem dere or I tell Raleigh bout every-*ting.*"

"All right." Mengles capitulated instantly. "Only —I don't know nuttin' about it, see? Nuttin' at tall."

Smetana nodded coolly. "Oh no. Nuttin' at all."

That afternoon a pile of rusty, long pieces of steel were brought to one end of the crane yard. They looked like laths, as Mengles had said; they were about ten feet long and very flexible. Smetana drooped the magnets above them. They flew up to their massive surfaces, writhing, and clanged there.

. . . . . .

Several days later, Raleigh, at the first toot of the noon whistle, sped to the corner of the inspection room that had been sanctified to him since his fight with Mulgully. The success of the concert had cemented Raleigh's singers into a swaggeringly proud club. Nowhere does snobbery so spring as in the very roots of a democracy. Raleigh watched with secret amusement the gigantic Kalousdian, twirling his moustaches and sailing up the hot-press shop with Giovanni mincing beside him, like a grand duke entering a ballroom with a dowager. Mulgully appeared from another door. Two men looked at him, consulted between themselves, then trailed along behind. Came Sapinsky and Mesanyov, and the others, and grouped round the hot billets on conveyors or inspection tables. Since the day when

McGill had found a car-load of potatoes on one of the tracks in the shop, that some strange switch-yard mistake had placed there, and had baked several of them in the little round ovens that the hot billets formed, there had been a great vogue of bringing all sorts of food, and cooking it at the noon rest period.

They all fell to eating with such a confusion of tongues as was never heard since the days of Babel. Raleigh was deep in talk with Fred and Moran, who, together with Smetana and Giovanni, formed the picked quartet among the men.

"I've got some beautiful things I'm arranging now," Raleigh was saying "I'm all keen on not giving another concert for at least two months, so that we can really work up a show of all our own things —a musical comedy that I'll write. Smetana here'd make a fine leading lady."

"That's all right" cut in McGill among the guffaws. "That's fine for the music, Dan. But I think you've started somethin' else." He dropped his voice. "My gang on the press is about disorganized. Sapinski's the only one of five that was in the concert. He's so damn stuck up that he won't hardly speak to the other guys. It's ruinin' my morale. They all want to join. I think you ought to take in about twice as many more as we've got now."

"Yes, an' hire the Hippodrome for the herd, I spose" retorted Moran. "I git what ye mean though. Ye ought to take more in, Rosy."

Raleigh nodded. "I'll form a whole new bunch and start some competitive singing" he said. "But I'll have to pick them a little. After all, everyone in this bunch is really musical, except Mulgully. But ultimately we'll get the whole damn place singing."

He finished his last sandwich and stood up. Most of the men were through eating, and were talking in groups and smoking.

"What shall it be, boys?" he asked.

A chorus greeted him. "Napoli"—"Kentucky Babe"—with a growing majority for the "Japanese Sandman." Raleigh lifted his hand, gave the pitch in a bellow, swung to an inspection table facing them, and the syncopated, lilting harmony began.

Men came in from other parts of the shop, as usual, until the room was nearly filled. When Raleigh's "Shop Chanty" began, the chorus was considerably increased; some hummed it uncertainly, others came out full voices, for the melody, in spite of its strange ancient simplicity (or more likely because of it) had taken with the force of a national song hit.

Smetana, at a look from Mengles, whispered to Raleigh under cover of the singing, and when it ended in a mighty shout, Raleigh spoke.

"Say boys, an old chap was at the concert the other night. He seems to think we were the original songbirds. He's got some sort of a scheme up his sleeve that he says is going to be fine for us, and wanted me to ask you to stick up for it—I gather it's something we have to vote on, perhaps—anyhow,

he wanted you all with him. Maybe he s going to give us all a job at Keith's. Anyhow, give him a glad hand when he talks to you, will you? He's coming out and harangue us some time soon."

"What's his name, Rosy?" called one, amid brief nods and ejaculations.

"Wabler—Tabler—he did tell me, but I've forgotten—wait a minute—Grabler, that's it."

The name meant nothing to the men. Mengles had wisely never mentioned it in his quiet talks.

Mulgully rumbled the sentiment of the others.

"Aw right, kid," he said, and spat voluminously. "If you say he's got the goods, we're for him."

The whistle shrieked, and the group dissolved with unwilling speed. Mengles grinned to Smetana. He planned a speech to Grabler displaying his own great cleverness.

CHAPTER XXI

CULMINATION

"OH Eleanor!" Raleigh, his work done for the day, stopped on the way to the Welfare Building as he caught sight of a familiar trim figure in blue going up one of the long corridors to the office.

She turned and smiled appreciatively at his eager face. Always these glimpses of Eleanor in the shops were consoling to him, with her small hats and her suits tailored to a simplicity that sang a song of Paris only to the discerning few. He was particularly glad to see her today.

"Such a joke" he bubbled, taking her hand, and grinning at her. "What are you doing now? I'm on my way up to the piano to try something over. Can't you come? I've got a screaming thing to tell you."

"I was just going out. Peggy McGill is here somewhere; I met her coming in and told her I'd run her up to her house."

"We'll find her after a while. Fred knows where I am; they'll come up here, I'm sure."

They mounted the stairs to the Welfare Hall,

empty and bare as if it had never masqueraded as an Italian palace. Raleigh opened the piano.

"What is this grand joke?" asked Eleanor. She welcomed Raleigh that afternoon. He was such a bubbling soul; she couldn't fancy herself getting emotional about him. One might as well become emotional over gingerale.

"Joke? Oh yes. Well—do you remember that chap at dinner that was particularly nasty to me? Lloyd or something."

"Boyd, Norman Boyd. He has a tongue like a debutante of ten years standing."

"Quite; and rather the look of one. You see, I ran into Reg Tyson on the street the other night, coming out of the Hollend. It was good to see him, too—Reg always assures one so of the ultimate respectability of the nation. He bore down upon me with a well-bred howl, and there was no escaping. We went to dinner at his club and were getting on beautifully, what with college gossip and Reg's flask, when this Boyd person appeared, and trickled into a chair nearby. He looked at Reg's guest, and when he recognized me, nearly fell under the table."

"He's just gotten into the Junefield after years of maneuvering," explained Eleanor. "And of course, the Tysons"—she made a mock genuflection.

Raleigh nodded. "I thought as much. Old Reg caught his stare, and nodded. After dinner he came over, and beamed at Reg, who started to introduce us. I was very stiff and proud, like the messenger in 'Alice Through the Looking Glass,' and Boyd

turned a little pink, and managed to emit that he had met me. 'Oh,' said Reg, who had been vacuum-cleaning me about what I was doing. He looked at Boyd the way Reg does, down his nose a little. 'You're jolly lucky' he said. 'I haven't been able to get hold of him till tonight.' Then he led me off, rather loftily. It was lovely."

Eleanor was looking at him with amused eyes. Sometimes he seemed very young.

"You know, you are really a little conceited, Dan" she said calmly.

"My dear, I am very conceited. It is the only defense of the sensitive against mediocre minds."

"Indeed! Well, kindly prove the superiority of your own by devising food, at once! I'm starved, and it's tea time."

"So am I. Wait." He darted downstairs, and presently returned with tea and crackers, and rolls, a jar of jam, and small cakes.

"Restaurant" he grinned. "I think I've made good. None but a superior mind ever makes friends with the cook."

He put the tray on the piano bench, and drew up chairs at the opposite ends of it.

"So like your room with the tip-table" he said laughing, and glancing round at the bare walls and floor.

"Yes," she entered in. "You ought to get Smetana—is that his name? to serve things on a piece of steel."

"Smetana's very busy operating a large crane at present. The only thing he could serve you would be girders at the end of a six ton magnet."

They talked eagerly and delightedly of many things. Raleigh, remembering the curious mood in which he had left her, looked, with masculine egoism, for an added sparkle in her speech, an added meaning in her words, and of course found them. He realized how stimulating she was with a dawning sense of great discovery.

"Why Eleanor" he said, leaning across the improvised table toward her. "I feel as if I'd never seen you before in my whole life. You're like a new person today."

"It's the environment" declared Eleanor. "I shine by contrast. Or perhaps it's this hat. I don't feel a bit that way about you. I feel as if I had been seeing you all my life. And it's only been—let's see—three months since I saw you reading *Pelleas* on the car."

"What did you really think?"

"I thought, 'Here's Romance with a smut on his nose.' I noticed the clothes first, of course. That's why I came and sat beside you. I knew the matching of that blue toque with the stripe in the Mackinaw wasn't coincidence. Then the *Pelleas*. What did *you* think?"

"When you spotted the score I nearly died of joy. It was someone speaking my language in a very foreign land, at that particular moment. I was afraid to look round for fear you'd be scrofulous

and have a squint. I nearly chewed you as one would a chocolate."

They both loved the nonsense.

"When can I come up to see you?" asked Raleigh, when they had reached the little cakes, and he had poured himself a third cup of tea out of the tin pot. "This is all very well, but I long to see you in front of that table of yours—why, it's been aeons since I've seen you."

"You forget the dinner."

"That didn't count. There were mobs of people. There always seem to be mobs of people; there was an odious person who referred all the time to things you had done in infancy together the last time I was there. I want—just you." Raleigh felt a tingle when he said it.

She was far too astute to point out that he had not demanded "just you." After all, she did like Raleigh tremendously. He didn't upset her.

"You can come next Thursday" she said. "Come to dinner with just mother and me."

"Will you wear that gold dress with the pink and gold chiffon train and the long gold earrings with little pink pearls?"

Eleanor gasped, and then seized his hand rapturously.

"Dan Raleigh—you *angel!* If men knew what it meant to girls to have clothes noticed like that, they'd go about with fashion notes in every pocket. Do you always observe like that?"

"Always." He forgot that he could not have

described one stitch of Peggy's clothes. "I'm quite shameless about it. I could tell you everything you had on at the Allen dinner—everything visible, that is" he added at her lifted brows. They both laughed, and he leaned toward her suddenly.

"Eleanor," he began in a voice dropped to the deep huskiness it held for earnest speech, and with an added vibrancy that gave her a pleasant exhilaration. "Do you think that I—"

There was a rush of footsteps—the door at the other end of the hall burst open, and the cook from whom Raleigh had procured the tea rushed into the room, his face livid with excitement and horror.

"The man on the electric crane's gone crazy—he's got Mr. Harde" . . . he stammered with fear.

Before the words had ceased echoing in the big hall Raleigh and Eleanor had sprung for the stairs, and were racing down. They sped up the corridor to the shops, Raleigh far in the lead. They flung round a corner leading into shop 6, and Raleigh almost knocked down Peggy McGill. One look at Raleigh's face, and she, with Fred, dashed after them.

"What is it?" McGill panted.

"Don't know—Uncle Dave—hurt—crane yard . . ."

They tore across the railroad tracks. Workmen, raising faces from their tools, dropped their work incontinently at sight of them and joined.

Raleigh ducked under a half open roller door,

tripped over a low shaft, and fell cursing. The others, following Fred, flashed through another door and across the shop to the crane yard beyond.

When he saw them they were already running down to the yard to a crowd collected under the crane. He caught up with the two girls, and together they burst through the crowd.

Raleigh for an instant, was unable to grasp the significance of what he saw.

In the blue white gleam of one of the yard arc-lights loomed the crane, the control box in the middle of its girder span. Against the faint grey of the last low twilight the crane's skeleton stretched gaunt and uncertain. The arm was slowly raising; the three great magnets hung thirty feet in the air. To their lower surface clung an indistinct mass.

As Raleigh looked, blinded by the light of the arc-lamp, a furnace in an adjacent yard opened, and painted the picture suddenly in white-rose light and black shadows. It lit the wild face of Smetana, leaning out of the control box, every vestige of sanity swept from his face. His eyes flared. It lit the angled iron-work of the crane, and vividly it lit the mass clinging to the magnets. Raleigh knew before he saw.

David Harde was crushed to them, strapped by half a dozen of the magnetized, flexible plates that curved round his body like withes and made contact with the magnets on each side of him. He was strapped like a papoose to a board. His face was white with pain; one arm had been caught to his

side; the other tried to pry away the steel plates across his chest. The magnets rose higher and higher.

It was very still; it seemed to Raleigh that Time had stopped. Voices whispered tensely beside him.

"We can't cut off the power—if we did he'd drop."

"Can't get to the control box—My God—he's shut off the juice himself an'——"

Raleigh heard a little gasp beside him. Eleanor Grayson, staring at the grotesquely helpless figure above them, threw her hand suddenly across her face with a curious throaty noise and sank against him.

At the same instant, rigid little fingers dug into his arm from the other side. Peggy, her eyes like blue flames was hissing into his ear.

"Smetana loves you. Talk to him. Keep him lookin' at you." She vanished.

Raleigh, his mind whirling with excitement, handed the inert Eleanor incontinently to Fred, slipped out of the circle, and stood clear. He looked up at Smetana. The boy was muttering to himself, and his eyes were fixed on the magnets.

Raleigh waved a hand that shook.

"Hello, Smetana" he called. With the alertness of his nerves, he realized his voice sounded strange and rough. He managed a genial smile through stiff lips.

Smetana looked suddenly down, saw him, and smiled, a terrifying brilliant smile. It made his

blazing white face beautiful as a coiled snake is beautiful.

" 'Ello, Mr. Raleigh." His high voice rose clear, and his face burned with the exaltation of the fanatic, a tremendous excitement under its calm. "You see Mr. Raleigh—I got heem. *They* got what they want, now." The crane arm was slowly and steadily mounting.

Raleigh nodded and smiled.

"Are you sure he's the one They want, Smetana? I don't think They want him at all."

Smetana laughed; a long peal of laughter that sent a shudder through the silent crowd below him.

"Oh no, Meester Raleigh—dey want him. Dey take my cousin; dey come for long time to me an' say dey want nudder one. Now dey get heem—same way."

Raleigh assumed a look of craft.

"Yes—but you know They want a young man—like your cousin. Put him down, Smetana, and take me. I'd love to go to They."

Smetana looked at him soberly, and slowly shifted a lever. The crane-arm stopped ascending—no one breathed—then another lever shifted and it began to descend. Raleigh's eyes remained fixed on the boy's face, and Smetana continued to gaze on him as if hypnotized.

But in the fringe of vision outside the focused image, Raleigh saw a figure climb quickly up the ladder below the control box and behind it, and begin edging along the lateral girder to the one

across the crane yard that supported the box. Desperately he struggled to keep his eyes on Smetana's, and hold the boy's look. Slowly the crane descended, Raleigh felt he had won.

To distract Smetana further, he began waving his hand as he did when leading the men in singing.

"How about the Shop Chanty, Smetana, before I go to They? Let's sing it."

Instantly the boy changed, with the swiftness of insanity. His smile died out. He jammed the gears with a clank, and the crane shot up giddily.

"No!" he cried. "Dey can't 'ave you—you so kind and good—They 'ave heem—he laugh—he *laugh* . . . a-a-a-h." The voice ended with a prolonged howl in which there was left nothing human. He swooped the crane arm across, the magnets swaying, and brought the figure clutched to them into a position over a broad flat girder forty feet above the floor. A groan welled up from the crowd below.

The climbing figure slipped from the lateral girder onto a transverse one directly behind and a little above the control box.

Raleigh saw, without looking, that it was Peggy walking, edging silently and swiftly along eight inches of steel swung in space.

The magnets hung motionless, twice a man's height above the girder. David Harde no longer moved; his head and arm hung limply down from the prisoning steel strips.

Smetana for the first time looked away from

Raleigh, and to the magnets. Very slowly they began to lower, and as it became apparent what he was doing, horror broke the silence that had held the crowd below . . . once David Harde was lowered to the girder, the cables of the magnets would sag, and the whole three ton weight would slowly fall on him . . .

Smetana seemed not to hear the shouts. He was again smiling like a busy child and watching the dangling arm and head, lowering slowly toward the girder. The crowd's cries fell to silence like a broken wave.

"Smetana! They do want me—they do—look at me!"

The boy's eyes returned to Raleigh's.

"No—dis—dis de one!" he screamed.

Suddenly he began to sing Raleigh's Shop Chanty. It was the more pungent with horror because the voice soared up clear and beautiful, yet with a strange nerve-biting vibrance—as a violin string will give unbearable clarity just before breaking.

The rest happened with incredible swiftness.

Lower swung the magnets. David Harde's drooping fingers were scarce arms length above the girder —closer crept Peggy, moving with infinite stealth. The red light caught her face, and burnished her black hair. Smetana's voice sang on.

Then the Shop Chanty faltered, broke. On Raleigh's ears fell the awful notes of the Forbidden Mode. Fiercely it rang out. It seemed to Raleigh that every evil swept clamoring to life to meet it—

that out of the machines slipped their malignant souls, that the very dust gathered into shapes of horror.

And as he watched, he saw Smetana's face unbelievably blur and alter—grow rigid with something infinitely more terrifying than human madness. *They* had indeed found a victim. His voice rose higher, a strange volume of sound billowing round it. It was not one voice. It was many.

David Harde's fingers touched the girder; his nerveless wrist doubled—the arm bent at the elbow, sagged on itself—the drooping head touched the girder.

Peggy was a short foot behind the control box. She stooped to jump into it.

Smetana's voice snapped into silence on a shrieking crest; he suddenly tossed his arms in front of his face in a curious warding gesture, clapped them to his head, and pitched forward in the control box.

For a moment everything went black to Raleigh; then he saw the magnets rapidly rising, saw Peggy in the control box. The magnets lowered to the ground; the crowd rushed forward, and when with a clank the prisoning plates of steel fell away as the current was shut off, gentle hands lifted the unconscious man.

But it was Eleanor who first reached him, and it was upon her lap his head lay.

All this Raleigh did not see, for he was the first of three up the ladder to the control box. He ran recklessly out on the girder to the control box.

Peggy swayed in it. He leaped beside her.

"Oh Dan" she sobbed, going suddenly limp.

"Peggy" His arms were round her. "Oh Peggy —I love you so!" They kissed.

This was their lovemaking; fifty feet in the air above a crowd of staring workmen.

. . . . . .

Dr. Ledlie, examining Smetana's body in the company's first aid room, raised a puzzled face to Parker.

"Yes—it's heart, all right. Er—it's a little odd—the heart seems actually to have burst . . . Very curious, very—there could have been little physical strain, and yet it is as if it were torn forcibly apart."

Parker was looking at the forehead.

"What do you make of this?"

"Eh? Oh—" the doctor looked. "Oh, bruise, I presume—or perhaps contact with a hot wire or something of the sort, when he collapsed."

Parker nodded, and gathered up his hat and coat.

"Well—I'm going along, and see if I can be of any help at Mr. Harde's. Seemed pretty well taken care of, though, with Raleigh and Miss Grayson. You're sure it's nothing serious with him?"

"Nothing in the least. He has some severe contusions and several abrasions where the steel strips pressed upon him—also an uncomfortable bruise on the head where the magnet first struck him when he was pulled up. God—what a frightful thing—one

of the men who saw told me the steel strips whipped up around him as the magnets knocked him down among them, and he was off the ground plastered to them in a second. No one but a subject for an alienist could have devised it. Curious, that heart condition . . ."

In the exact centre of Smetana's white forehead was indented, with great delicacy and clearness, an inverted Crux Ansata, or symbol of life. It was as firm as if it had been stamped there with a tiny red die.

CHAPTER XXII

LAMENTOSO

LATE that night Raleigh left his uncle sleeping restfully, and discovered the roadster still at the door where it had been left when they brought David home. Exultantly he got in and shot, with a singing heart, across the city to Peggy McGill. He shouted snatches of music, and accompanied his soaring melody with swoops and curves of the powerful car that left a trail of hysteric women and raging traffic officers. He brought the car to a stop before Peggy's lighted house, and bounded up the steps.

An hour and a half later, she watched him go slowly down the walk and away, then slumped into a chair and cried.

Raleigh had asked her to marry him and she had refused flatly.

CHAPTER XXIII

MUTUAL COUNCIL

THE front door of David Harde's home closed softly on Raleigh as he turned up his coat against the stinging staccato of the fine cold rain. Three days rest and an inherently splendid vitality had brought the Hydraulic's President swiftly back to accustomed and restless vigor—and to the rebellion of the active against the bathgowned relaxities of convalescence. Raleigh had spent a surprising hour with him; the accident had stripped David of his accustomed reserve, and he had talked, man to man, to the other with the warmth and interest seldom expended upon relatives—saved rather for stimulating and sure friends. To Raleigh he stepped unexpectedly into the role of the latter. He talked of his early ambitions—of the work that had meant growth of the huge plant—of what he hoped to accomplish. And Raleigh listened, and questioned and suggested, out of his shop experience, with a sageness that amazed and secretly delighted David Harde.

"They're marvellous, those men" he told his uncle,

as the talk swung to their concert. "They react with more sureness and accuracy to supremely fine things than the majority of the more sophisticated people whom we know. You see, they're fresh and unspoiled. They are in vital contact with realities—and not too pleasant ones, either. They are not hampered by this pall of convention that sits upon us, and makes us smother every emotion and feeling we have as if it were an illegitimate child."

His uncle snorted.

"It's perfectly true! I'll bet you I could give a fifteen minutes' talk on Beethoven's Fifth Symphony—a little of the composer's life—his struggles, his loneliness, his lack of understanding—all the things that they know—and then have a fine orchestra with a real conductor play it for them—and they'd react a hundred times more finely and keenly, and with more accuracy of emotional orientation than your average symphony audience."

So they had talked. Raleigh left with the sense of meeting for the first time a forceful and interesting man whose restless eagerness he profoundly understood. The glow of it had momentarily banished the dull ache at the base of him.

But now the sad naked trees and the grey hopelessness of the streaked sky quenched him swiftly, becoming the objectivation of his mood of cold apathy —a mood lit sullenly with an angry smoulder of rebellion. For once, as he stood for a moment on the gleaming, rainsluiced sidewalk, he did not sort his emotions, but let piqued pride, a deep hurt, and

something deeper still that refused to accede to Peggy's decision, mingled within him to a misery almost unendurable. He experienced it physically as a morbid sensitiveness—the feel of his clothes, of the rain, of his own body was become intolerable to him.

He kicked savagely at a forlorn bit of paper on the sidewalk, and started toward the car-line.

Then he glanced across the street. The Grayson house, with its broad windows and sheltered hedges beckoned him.

"Eleanor . . . She'll understand." He crossed the empty shining street and rang the bell.

Rameses opened the door to him with a delighted grin. The old darkey had liked Raleigh since the first moment of his coming.

"Yon's quality" he had asserted to fat Maria Todd over the Monday wash-tubs.

"Miss Eleanuh? She sho is, suh. Lemme rest yo' hat an' coat, Massa Dan."

He stalked away like a benign monolith.

"Miss Eleanuh done present huh obligations, suh, an' say to hallucinate yuhself in de drawin' room an' she'll be raht down."

Raleigh chuckled in spite of himself at the incorrigible ape in the African that renders him peculiarly susceptible to poly-syllabic hypnosis. He wandered into the library, picked up a book, and opened it at random.

"He opened his arms wide, and Edith crept into them like a tired bird into its nest," he read. He banged the book down.

"Rot" he muttered, and strode wrathfully into the big living room. He sat at the piano, sprayed a melancholy handful of chords over the keys, then stopped abruptly, and laid his head on his arms atop the folded music-rest. The rain tinkled dismally at the window.

Eleanor's hand on his shoulder straightened him suddenly. She was looking at him wide-eyed, with her tip-tilted eyebrows drawn down in concern.

"Why Dan—what in the world is the matter?"

He rose, and shook his head silently, half turning away. Eleanor had chosen a bad time. Speech was impossible. The girl laid a very light hand on his arm.

"Dan Raleigh"—her voice was low—"*what* has happened?"

"Oh, it's"—He stopped, caught, for a moment, by a dismaying memory of their drive homeward from the dinner, of the strange look in Eleanor's eyes. Of course, he was sure, now, of his brotherly attitude . . .

He played with the end of the piano cover for a moment, then lifted his stooped head and looked at her squarely.

"Ellie,—I'm sadly hit." He touched his chest, with a faint attempt at humor.

For an instant she stood perfectly still, expressionless, her life-long guides of restraint and control active against the essential structure of her. Then her look of concern relaxed slightly.

"It's Peggy, isn't it?" she queried softly.

Raleigh nodded miserably, looking away.

"But Dan—I don't . . . I think it's *lovely!* Why are you . . ."

Raleigh experienced a sudden brief buoyance of relief. He could tell her as he had wanted to. That was all right, anyhow. He gratefully sat down beside her on the couch, as she patted a place for him.

"Now tell me," she said, looking at him with the consciousness of a curious detachment, and feeling, for the moment, at least twenty years older. The mother—complex again—no woman can have men "tell her" things, without the same feeling. Eleanor had a ridiculous impulse to cuddle his tall head on her shoulder and say "There, there," as to a small and injured child.

"There's not much to tell. I—I realized it at the accident, and—that night, after I left Uncle Dave, I went right over to Peggy's. I told her all about it, and . . ." his voice trailed off for a moment.

"She turned me down flat, Elllie," he finished in an almost matter-of-fact tone.

Eleanor's start was sufficiently comforting.

"Not *really?*"

"Very really."

"But"—Eleanor's amazement continued to grow, "but Dan, I don't see how she—"

Raleigh laughed a little.

"You're very flattering, Ellie, but the fact remains that she did."

"But *why?*"

"Ah, that's it. I thought maybe you could tell

me that, knowing how a girl's mind works. I've thought for the last three days till my head's a beehive . . . You see, I promised not to see her again for a week."

"What did she say, at least?"

"Why, she said that I was just infatuated—that it was the excitement of the accident and all. She seems to feel—"

Eleanor interrupted.

"Just one thing, Dan. Do *you* really think that she is in love with you, no matter what she says?"

Raleigh looked at her soberly. "Yes, Ellie I do. I—one feels those things, I think."

("I wonder," thought Eleanor, in a fleeting aside.)

Raleigh rose and began pacing the room.

"Oh, it was too absurd, all of it. She said that she was not the right person for me, and that—"

He stopped, flushing suddenly.

Eleanor, watching him closely smiled a little.

"And that I am, I suppose?" she finished for him, with a ripple of well-managed laughter.

Raleigh carefully looked away.

"Um—yes . . . You see, she thought—"

"I know just what she thought." She was silent a moment. "What a marvellously big person," she said, half to herself. "I couldn't—and I'm not sure that it's right."

She turned to Raleigh who was staring moodily into the fire.

"Still, Dan, I don't see why that should—"

"Neither do I. It's this sort of thing that is worrying her. Remember the day we decorated the hall for the concert. Do you recall our talking about Venice and Italy, and quoting Benvenuto Cellini at each other?"

"Why, no." Eleanor looked blankly at him. "I suppose we did, though."

"You see, you didn't even remember. Peggy did. She said—she said she didn't even speak my—our—language, and that I'd be sorry after we'd been married a little while . . . and all the time looking at me . . . my *God,* Ellie, I *know* she cares for me."

"She's magnified our difference in experience and education into a huge gulf," he finished, running his hand through his hair, a gesture of puzzlement with him always, and kicking at the logs in the fireplace. Thus the change in Eleanor's expression and mood, as her thoughts took a sudden inward leap, failed to reach him. She sat up straight.

"Then you think there is no gulf between a man and woman of utterly different environments, backgrounds, inherited attitudes toward life and ways of thinking?"

"No. The only gulf is a mind-made chasm resulting from a facile acquiescence to a convention of mediocre minds."

"Dan!" Eleanor leaned forward. "Do you really believe that?"

He looked round at her in astonishment.

"Don't you? Don't tell me you think she's right, she——"

"Oh you and Peggy—of course. She's absurd, bless her honest little heart. You are an extremely lucky young person, Dan, if you can convince her . . ." Her eyes became grave again. "I was thinking in more general terms. I was wondering if it was always true."

"Mmm." Raleigh shook his head. "I don't know. If the case were reversed, I'd not be at all so sure."

"Why?" flashed Eleanor defensively. "Sauce for the gander should be sauce for the goose."

"That's all very well, but the goose, unfortunately or otherwise, assumes more or less the sauce and garnishings of the gander with whom she shares the nest—or roasting pan."

"Please come out of the symbolic kitchen. I shall be talking of marital duties in the form of stuffing and capers in a moment."

"All right. I suppose I'm merely trying to state an ancient truism—that the girl assumes the friends, position and general entourage of the man she marries. It's always like that—never the reverse."

"But suppose—" Eleanor was thinking aloud "suppose—did you ever see 'The Admirable Crichton?' "

"Yes—movie-ized most marvellously, not long ago. It always made me rage, that play."

"Oh—then you think that Lady Mary ought to have run away with the butler?"

Raleigh softly pounded the arm of the sofa.

"I think if one really loves a person, nothing else ought to count for one moment, *nothing* . . . that's what I told her" he finished ruefully.

Eleanor stared into space for a moment . . . if one could only be sure . . .

"Dan," she said suddenly, "how do you know—how are you *sure* you love Peggy, really love her?"

"I often used to wonder myself. I've asked pals of mine that were engaged. I don't know. You just—do."

"As simple as that?"

"Yes, for me. I fancy it's not the same for everybody."

For a moment they both sat very still, each busy with the thoughts absorbing them. Then Eleanor sighed minutely, and touched Raleigh's arm.

"Would you like to have me see Peggy?" she asked gently.

"Why—I never thought—do you believe——"

"She think's I'm in love with you?"

Raleigh squirmed and turned crimson. "Well, she——"

Eleanor's laugh was perfect.

"That's the best sign in the world that she is, Dan. Perhaps if I——"

Raleigh went to her, shaking his head.

"No. You're a dear to want to. But I want to do it alone. You know? I—I just had to talk it over with someone, though. You see, the part that's hardest is the uncertainty. Mostly I'm sure that she—she does care for me, and it's just a

misguided idea of being noble that makes her act like this. But sometimes—I wonder if it's just my own feeling that makes me see the same thing in her?"

"I don't know—but I don't think so. At least, your own feelings are quite clear . . . That's something."

She rose, and stood for a moment looking musingly at Raleigh, his own eyes bent on the floor, his own intense self-preoccupation curtaining his sensitiveness in such wise as to prevent it's answering her mood as he normally would have done.

Eleanor glanced at her watch.

"Dan, I'm sorry, but I must run and dress. Can't you stay here and have dinner with mother and me? I'm going out after, but——"

"Thanks awfully, Ellie—I can't. I'd be a most dreadful dinner guest tonight." He shook hands with her warmly.

"You're a dear," he said, looking down at her. The trouble in his dark eyes seemed to set them deeper than ever under his brows.

"It's been fine to talk to you. It's helped a lot."

"It's helped me, too" unexpectedly she returned. "No, not tonight," to the questions suddenly forming on his face. "I'll tell you, though—some time."

He walked beside her to the door, silent, and suddenly uncomfortable again. She stood for a moment on the steps, while he drew on his gloves. The rain had stopped, and a faint wind, warm, and

softly suggestive of new earth, stirred vaguely. Veiled stars had come out.

"Theatre?" he asked, burning to ask quite otherwise things.

"Yes, theatre." Then her eyes twinkled in spite of her. "We seem to have the McGill family much on our minds, Dan. I'm going to see the opening of 'Mary Rose' with Bob. Goodnight." Before he could speak, she ran back up the steps into the house.

Raleigh stared after her, a multitude of questions, wonderments, excited queries falling into his mind like shooting stars. He thought rapidly back over the conversation of the last half hour, and whistled softly, with sudden warmth of cheek and brow, as parts of it came back . . .

"You blind, selfish idiot," he told himself savagely and strode away.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE IDEA COMES

THREE days later, Raleigh boarded his morning car to the shops, and made for the stove at one end of it, shivering a little. This dun prelude to the day even his imagination could never paint with the colors of romance. Once in the shop, the glow of the friendly hot metal near him, the presence of the friends he had earned, the thunderously ordered beauty of the machines—all made the din and dirt bearable. But the ride to work he could never envision. Long after, he could smell the indescribably depressing odor of cold slush and wet iron—of tired fetid air—could feel the leaden dullness of the inert lumps of humanity who sat and slept miserably to their respective stops, and tumbled off like sacks.

He saw Mesanyov, his head bobbing with every motion of the car like a Jack-in-the-box on its spring. Raleigh slipped into the seat beside him, slid his arm across the back of it, and pillowed the nodding head on his shoulder, smiling faintly.

He had gone about his work in a dream—his manuscripts lay untouched, and the noon singing, partly because of the excitement over David's ac-

cident, and partly because of a deep stirring unrest among all the men, had ceased. Of this coiling unrest Raleigh was supremely unconscious.

Freddy found him moody, silent and strange. After one or two well meaning attempts to draw him out, that resulted in feverish flippancy or monosyllables, Fred wisely let him alone. In no wise did he connect the change in Raleigh with the strange lapses in Peggy's ebullience.

Raleigh's own head nodded, as the car rocked on, and the noise of its wheels iterated confusedly in his ears . . . he drifted off into a whirling world of wheels—of long lines of trees with little spinning discs instead of leaves . . . Peggy came toward him down a long avenue of them; her arms reached up and drew his head down to her . . .

The intensity of it woke him violently. Almost at the same moment the car jolted round a corner, and Mesanyov awoke. He stared at Raleigh wildly an instant with wide, sleep-blind eyes, than snuggled on his shoulder like a warm puppy.

"Ah, it is you, barin" he said comfortably. Then he sat up with sudden animation.

"Oh, but it is the great day, today."

"What great day?" echoed Raleigh. His cheeks still tingled with the touch of Peggy's hands on them.

"Today is big shop meeting, barin. We all go on strike and then we all be bosses!" Mesanyov launched into voluble and incoherent discourse that soon mingled to Raleigh with the rhythmic noise of

the trolley . . . Suppose he had let Eleanor go to Peggy . . . Well, tonight would end the week of probation she had set for him to "think about it" . . . Never had he seen the eight hours of work stretch so endless before him . . .

Mesanyov still talked.

". . . and what Grabler tells us, we do. Then——"

Raleigh jumped. "Who?"

"Grabler. He talk to us today. He want us strike. We get more pay, and all be bosses——"

Raleigh clutched Mesanyov's arm.

"Who is Grabler? How do you know he's going to talk to you?"

Mesanyov turned on him brown and kindly eyes that glowed with the eagerness of a child.

"You see, barin—night for las', I go down to Toney Pete's. Toney——"

Mesanyov winked elaborately, and made the ritual gesture of the lifted and emptied glass.

"You know, barin? He make it—hisself. Mengles—he de union man, too—he get very drunk. He tell me today come Grabler to talk to us in shop meeting. He is—what you say—agitator. What he tell us, we do that. Then we all be——"

"Good God!" Raleigh suddenly exploded. So that was his benign philanthropist. Fragments of his talk with Grabler returned, fitting themselves catastrophically together—the man's interest in his power over his singers, his recognition of them as the leaders among the foreign element, his curious

insistence on Raleigh's actively prejudicing them in his favor.

Then he remembered other things—something he had overheard Culhane say to one of the office men the day before, and which had glanced off his apathetic mind——

"The furriners tip the scales—if they go out, it means a walk-out enough to tie us up. If they stay we're all right."

And his men would undoubtedly decide, one way or the other . . . He thought of the gullible picture he had made for Grabler, and flushed hotly.

Mesanyov interrupted his angry brooding.

"When we have the next sing-practice for concert, barin?" Mesanyov, having placidly decided that all were to be bosses in a near state, had gone on to other things.

"What? Oh, I don't know—next week, I guess."

Then he gasped. If the strike occurred there would be no next week—nor next month—of his congenial little groups of songsters—no more intensely valuable work with his human laboratory on the substance of folk song, no more jolly evenings of rehearsals. Then the men would be scattered, his friends vanished——

Raleigh saw his new world dissolving in chaos, and turned to Mesanyov with a new intensity. This strike must not be.

"Listen—is there really going to be a strike?"

"Yes barin, I think. Mengles he say Grabler

tell us what to do, and we do it. Mengles been talk long tam' bout di meeting. We all do what Grabler say. He make us all——"

Raleigh's fist banged on the other's knee.

"Don't you do it! He just wants to make trouble. You strike, you'll all be laid off—no work, no money —just hunting around for a job."

But Mesanyov smiled imperturbably. "Oh, we get much more money later, when the union she is recognize here. Then we all come back, barin and we all be bosses."

Raleigh felt as if he were fighting a great, soft, placid featherbed, a cloud of calm down that smothered every word he said. He shook his head impatiently.

"But you can't come back then. They will hire other men."

Mesanyov's child-like smile broadened. "Oh, no barin. We not let them. We not let them in those other men. They bad. They want our jobs. We make them stay away. If they try to come we blow them up."

Raleigh looked at him intently. Passive, smiling, his great eyes looked into Raleigh's with the innocence of a small child and the velvet softness of a faun, while he calmly parroted the formula of "blowing them up." In a flash, Raleigh realized the folly of argument with such a man—with all his kind. Most of them could not think far, and the men upon whom they depended for their opinions, the men who, in another age, thought for them and led them,

lied, and played them like fish for their own ends. They had leaped from the frying-pan of capital into the fire of demagogism. Raleigh sensed his own impotence against the vast inertia of Mesanyov as typical of thousands like him.

He saw the danger of the day, but remotely. Near at hand lay the abrupt termination of his music, the breaking of his circle.

His mind, never a logical one, seemed to have stopped. He remembered what Grabler had said to him—"your men represent the leaders in the foreign element here."

He felt suddenly and awfully reasonable.

Then, as they left the car, and joined the plodding procession of figures up the half-dark roadway to the shops, there came the Idea, fullborn. Raleigh turned cold and hot as he caught it.

"Mesanyov!" He pinched the little Russian excitedly, and bent down to his ear.

"This afternoon, when Grabler talks to you, I want all the men who were in the concert to be together. All of you get around Freddy McGill. Try to see the others, and tell them this. We want . . . Will you do this for me?"

"Sure," returned Mesanyov amiably. Had Raleigh told him to plant a bomb under the corner of the Welfare Building, he would have done so with equal eagerness. "I tell them, Rosy," he said.

At the lockers, he met Fred.

"Freddy," he plunged, "I want all of you that were in the concert to be together at that meeting this

afternoon—I want them all round you. You get as near the speaker as you can."

McGill pulled his shirt off and stared at Raleigh through arches of dark hair hanging athwart his eyes.

"Well, that's the first pep I've seen you show for three days. What's the big idea?"

"You'll see. Just watch me this afternoon. Can't say more now."

"Peggy's comin' over this afternoon," volunteered Fred. "I told her there'd likely be some excitement. You know she got a wonderful letter from Mr. Harde."

Raleigh stood stock still, his work-shirt half over his naked shoulders.

"Oh," he said quite casual of tone, "is she? I was coming over tonight to see her. Don't forget about this afternoon, Freddy. It—it means a lot to me."

He fled away to work, and it seemed to him that suddenly his whole body was singing. Peggy to be there! . . .

At noon, Culhane stopped him, hurrying to wash. All morning the subdued excitement had been mounting under the mantle of work and roaring noise of ordinary procedure. Men talked together in little knots, to separate at the approach of a foreman, or stared curiously at one another, silent. Norton had been hurrying through the shops, with a stranger, his face drawn with anxiety.

Culhane seized Raleigh, and without a word, drew

him into the little office. They were alone. He looked at him eagerly.

"Well?" he asked.

Culhane's speech was quick and clipped.

"That bunch of yours at the concert. How they going to stand on the strike?"

"I don't know. Mesanyov is the only one I've talked to. He's all for it. They are like children. You might as well argue with a babe of three."

Culhane stared at him incredulously. "You mean —you mean you haven't got 'em all lined up for us?"

Raleigh flushed. "I—I forgot all about it, Pat. I did hear there was going to be a meeting Thursday, but didn't pay any attention to it. I've—I've been . . ."

Pat drew a hand across his forehead, and his voice trembled.

"My God, boy, can't you get to 'em? We thought you had 'em all lined up for us. I spose you know them men in your quartets happen to be the leaders o' the damn foreigners, and the others 'll follow what they do like sheep?"

Raleigh thought of Grabler's talk and flushed.

"Yes—I was told—my bunch were the leaders. I didn't realize it. I haven't paid any attention to the whole affair. Mesanyov told me coming out on the car that the meeting was this afternoon."

Culhane continued to stare at him, as at one seeing the unbelievable. Suddenly he laughed bitterly. "I don't believe you'd know it if someone put a dynamite bomb under yuh with a lit fuse."

CHAPTER XXV

YELLOW ROSES

DAVID'S business methods were still sufficiently patriarchal to demand, according to the most approved efficiency chart, too much personal detail from him. But he liked it, and encouraged the informal habit that long years had brought of having heads of departments drop into his office with ideas, and for advice.

So when Parker's brown head popped in with "May I see you a moment, Mr. Harde?" Parker's rotund person followed with no hesitancy. David liked Parker, and this morning actually welcomed him.

"Well—what's new?"

"I don't know." Parker shook his head. "I don't like the look of things. This shop meeting this afternoon—Culhane told me the foreigners will tip the scales for or against enough of a walk-out to tie things up badly."

"God send them sense," returned David grimly, "but He won't."

Parker hesitated.

"Do you think it was wise to let them have that meeting here, Mr. Harde?"

"Why not? We don't want any secrets. When the shop committee came with the idea, I saw the way the wind was blowing. It's out of our hands now—but it's much better to let them feel they're quite free to do what they like here. After all, it's their shop."

"Of course, in principle, I know . . . But there are rumors that they're to have a noted union agitator here to speak——"

"I know. Grabler. He's a dangerous power-seeker, and a very able talker. However, it's one of the things I've tried for most—to have the men feel that this is their place—and if they want to have Emma Goldman, they can—as long as she doesn't actually throw bombs. I'm counting on the thing we've tried to build up, and the men's innate good sense."

"It seems like flying in the face of providence to allow a man like that inside the plant."

David made a slightly impatient gesture. "Well—we've flown. It'll be a pretty effective test as to whether our efforts have meant anything besides large words." He made a movement as of dismissing the subject. "What's on your mind?"

"It's young Raleigh."

David glanced quickly up. "Oh"—then, curiously. "What's he up to now?"

"Nothing that I know of, except planning another concert. It's this. I want him in my department.

He's the kind I need. He's doing a marvellous thing, Mr. Harde, and has gotten close to the men in a way I don't pretend to have done. It's a curious kind of sympathy he projects—they all like him. That song of his has gone all over the place, and the other departments are clamoring for slogan-songs of their own."

"Yes, I knew they'd been after him to write some more." He did not add that Raleigh had spent the afternoon with him three days before, and regaled him with shop incident until the august president had been reduced to tears of mirth, and had vowed to find something better than tossing billets for his amazing nephew.

"Yes?" said Parker, a little aback. (How on earth did the Old Man know everything, he wondered.) "Well, I propose to take him into my department, at a good salary, and have him do music for the men, just as he is doing, but give all his time to it, and centering it around the Welfare Building, instead of outside. Gradually he can take over all the entertainment end of it I had planned—classes, etc. I'm going to be swamped with the new restaurant and the family improvement development and the insurance. What do you think?"

"Fine—but will he take it? Norton offered him two jobs, one in the sales and one in the engineering, and he politely refused. Told Norton his own development was progressing sufficiently where he was!" David chuckled for the first time that day.

"Oh—he'll take it, I think. Music is his one big

thought. Why he's here or where he came from, God knows."

David's chuckle rose to a snort and a choke. "Well —try it out."

Parker nodded. "All right. I wish this trouble was over in the shops. Wonder how he'll stand on it? He ought to pull a bunch with him."

David sobered grimly. "I've been wondering about that myself," he said.

When Parker had gone, he sat for a moment, rubbing the nearly healed bruise on his shoulder. Then he picked up the telephone and gave a number. As the voice came over the wire, his face changed oddly; lines shifted about the mouth and eyes; it's angularity softened into a half-smile.

"Hello—Eleanor . . . Yes. I wish you would come over to the shops this afternoon. Yes, it's very special. You know about this meeting? . . . Exactly. Well it will mean a great deal. I'd—I'd like to have you here. It's a crisis, in a way, of whether our ideas have meant anything. . . ."

He listened a moment, nodding, then his smile flashed white teeth suddenly.

". . . Did you? Yes, do—I'm glad they're yellow instead of red—wear them by all means . . . I hope it's an omen—yellow's the color of prosperity—and red—a certain flag has given it undue prominence . . . yes, about three-thirty. Come to my office. Oh by the way, who was the young gladiator I saw you with at 'Mary Rose' the other night? What? Now, where have I heard . . .

No, you don't tell me—brother of that brave girl who . . . yes . . . no; this is my first day out, you know, but I wrote her . . . Where may I ask, did you meet Mr. Robert McGill?"

There was a long silence on David's part, during which Miss Thompson, chancing to uncover the extension phone in her office, caught the words ". . . trying an experiment, David—you remember the Richard Harding Davis story where an infatuated bachelor puts the picture of his lady-love in a chair and talks to it one entire evening? Well, you see, I . . ." Miss Thompson replaced the receiver and returned to her letters with a slightly wrinkled brow.

David chuckled. "What was the result? Oh—too early to tell, eh? . . . Yes, of course; well, I can't use up my precious time like this, with perhaps a complete shut-down facing me tomorrow . . . don't be flippant, young lady . . . see you at three thirty."

He sat back, a curious, wistful, eager light in his eyes for a moment that would have mystified his business associates. Then he seized a pile of papers and shouted for Miss Thompson.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE HYPER-DORIAN MODE

WHEN Raleigh, frenzied with the delay of an appointment with Parker, his head still whirling with what that meeting had held for him, reached the cutting shop, the speaker was just finishing. Raleigh felt his heart sink as he looked out over the sea of men. The buildings were quiet with the uncanniness of noisy places suddenly stilled. Only the distant surging rhythm of the three great presses came faint but plainly to him. The huge room was in semi-shadow—the short daylight already fading, and the sun shot level beams of orange watery light through the dulled glass of the western windows. It streaked the machinery here and there with highlights, subduing the mass of men into general dimness, as they stood listening, tense, their faces lifted to the speaker, occasionally nodding to each other, or uttering short guttural growls of approval. Raleigh looked at those nearest him with the detachment of a spectator at a play, conscious of a growing desire to burst. The men's eyes never left the tall figure above them in the center of the shop

on a cutting press platform—a man with a surcharged carrying voice, and flinging arms like flails.

Raleigh stepped up on a cutting machine and looked around. He picked out McGill. He was in the center of the floor, in the first line of men, packed about the press. Around him were the others—Mesanyov and Sapinski and Giovanni, Doolan and Kalousdian—all his men.

He took one look and threaded through the men, with a whispered greeting and a smile here and there. He was still in the undress of his work, for he had gone straight from the press to Parker, and his white shirt and shoulders and tall, yellow head stood out from the dark mass of men. He reached McGill's side just as Grabler, with a final fling of his arms concluded. His face gleamed and his pale eyes bulged with excitement. He held them with one upflung hand.

There was an instant's silence—then a roar—applause, mingled shouts, calls, echoed in the huge shell of a building. The surging of the three great presses faded under it. Raleigh grabbed McGill's arm, and shouted into his ear.

"Now—do as I say—*sing like hell!* Watch me."

Three or four of his men nearest, their faces still blazing with excitement of Grabler's stirring, leaned towards him to catch the words. Before McGill could reply, Raleigh had swung across the little empty space to the press, climbed it, and stood on the platform beside Grabler, who waved his arms in a frantic effort to be heard again. The bedlam was

deafening. Raleigh picked up an iron lever-bar and advanced. He nodded to Grabler. The agitator frowned.

"Here—what do you want?" he snapped sharply, in a low voice. The roar of applause and shouting suddenly dropped at Raleigh's tall figure beside Grabler.

Raleigh did not reply. White with excitement, he stepped forward in front of the other and flung up his right arm, grasping the bar.

Moblike, the huge crowd fell to silence. The rhythm of the presses came faintly upon it, like a distant surf. Raleigh spoke. His big voice, crisped with excitement, carried to the farthest corner of the building.

"Boys," he cried, "we've just heard a talk. Let's show the gentleman what we can do. Let's give him a song."

His eyes were bent upon McGill and the others, below. He lifted the bar like a baton. The sun, dropping clear of smoke, suddenly flooded through the windows full on the high platform, and covered Raleigh with a golden glory, as he stood, naked arm upraised and big body tense. It gleamed through his towsled light hair like an aureole. The rest of the room, lower, remained dim; only the splendid taunt figure glowed, suspended in the dark void.

The flood-tide of emotion and excitement in the room paused sharply, like a visible current, and began to pile up the silence. Raleigh waited until the suspense was almost unbearable, then crashed down the

bar, and sent his voice out in the "Hot-press Chanty." With a shout of song, his trained chorus of men was with him. He had timed it well. The tide of emotion, blocked of its expression of shouting, swung, rushed, into the channel of song.

Men near took up the chant. Then others. Back of it all, mingling and sustaining, came the rhythm of the three great presses—for the rhythm of the song was the beat of the presses. More men joined, the chorus steadily grew—half grasped at the words, half roared out the elemental, stirring theme. As it came to the last line, Raleigh advanced a step, lifted his left arm, and with a great gesture, swept them all into the repetition. Irresistibly the men surged forward, singing, their eyes shining, their faces lifted to the strangely lit figure above them, carved like a golden god, and glowing in the sun.

And, as the singing mounted stronger and stronger, with the swelling voices, as man after man came in on the flooding excitement of the moment and lifted his voice to a roar, the room began to vibrate like a cathedral with the organ's peal upon it. Wave after wave of sound surged against the walls and back. Men grasped each other's hands, unconsciously, and smiled, singing,—almost visibly, to the exalted lad leading them, something began growing between and among them—a close-knit, glowing enthusiasm, a strange warmth—a unity—a loyalty——

Raleigh felt the exultant triumph of it flow into him from the great mass of singing men, and it seemed that, queerly, everything shifted, blurred;

outlines wavered. They grew luminously clear; he saw the scene as with another sense—as if powerful rays dissolved its material surface and revealed its shining reality; he seemed to be upon a huge slab of white stone; overhead, a very near sky, dusty and glittering with stars. Behind him, leaped the light of a great altar fire, painting him with gold, and back of it, the sharp entaglio of a colonnade of pillars—before him, broad stone steps, and multitudes of men stretching into the distance—men with bare necks and arms, with dark, intense faces lifted to him as he led them in song. The altar fire seemed to leap through him to them, with a singing flame and a roaring whir of great wings, and of mighty winds whirling out of the sky and shouting one word—Loyalty—loyalty—loyalty . . . the ecstasy shook him . . . then he saw again the shop, the men below him, but the feeling remained, the bond—the uplift . . .

With a supreme gesture, he flung the bar up—held the final, prolonged note of chant until the shop roared and echoed and throbbed, and then, with a crash, brought the bar down upon a piece of sheet steel.

Peggy, watching near the door between Eleanor Grayson and David Harde, sucked in her breath sharply, and sunk her fingers into Eleanor's arm till she winced.

There fell a silence—and through it the panting of men—a silence that crackled. Raleigh stepped to the very edge of the platform.

"Boys," he cried, his voice high and strange to himself, "that song we've sung together—it means loyalty. It means we stick by each other, and by the plant. It means we play fair. Are we going to be quitters? Are we going to go back on men that have trusted us? Are we going to be fooled? I was fooled—by the man who has just talked to you. But I didn't know, then, that he wanted to break up our bunch here. Are we going to let any outsider tell us how to run ourselves? No, not by a damn sight. We're going to play the game square, square——"

He flashed a hand up.

"How many are going to stick on the job with me?"

No silence this time—a roar that engulfed him, as the men swept toward the platform. He glanced round for Grabler. That gentleman, whatever his faults, could sense an atmosphere. He had vanished.

Raleigh was pulled from the platform, and into the arms of McGill. He embraced him with a wild whoop. Mesanyov cast himself on Raleigh's neck, sobbing with Slavic excitement, and kissed him moistly. He was led off . . .

Then, somehow, suddenly, incredibly, the crowd parted, and Peggy was coming to him. She was running, with her hands out. Her eyes were bright with unshed tears. She flung herself straight into his arms.

"I can't help it" he caught in a choky voice, its mellow curves for once broken. "I've got to have you. Oh Dan——" . . .

All his life, Raleigh had dreamed of his great moment. Always it had been a thing apart—a climax caught on the crest of some lonely wooded hill, under the crescent of a young moon smiling to the dying west, with a woods such as Melisande might have been lost in behind them, gnarled with mysterious blue shadows, greenly old. . . .

He was surrounded by begrimed, furiously exultant workmen, whose roaring cheers mounted as he bent his head above Peggy.

Eleanor, watching from the other end of the room, had seen Peggy's head lift, had seen her poise. Then she knew, and watched her without surprise dart into the crowd like an arrow.

She adjusted the great bunch of golden roses at her breast carefully, and turned with her silver chime of laughter to the dazed David Harde.

"It's—quite mediæval, David," she said, her exquisitely modelled face lifted slightly, one small grey gloved hand resting for a moment on David's arm. "The knight victorious, and the swift guerdon of the ladye faire . . ."

She moved lightly toward the door.

"How stunning he looked in that shaft of light—like Orpheus in a gym shirt, with steel and a sunbeam for a lyre."

With a last look toward the surging shop, she turned with David up the corridor toward the office, her chin raised.

. . . . . .

"But how did ye do it?" cried Pat, his hand on Raleigh's shoulder, as he stood outside the little office, waiting for McGill. Peggy he had unwillingly parted with to change his clothes. Pat had brought word that she was waiting outside the offices for him, with David Harde. The men, laughing, jesting, still high and vivid with excitement, had gone home.

Raleigh, not yet himself, turned luminous eyes on the foreman.

"I? I had nothing to do with it. It was the force of the hymn to Apollo—the old mode—the evocative power—expressing loyalty."

McGill burst upon them round the corner of the lockers, linked his arm through Raleigh's and bore him off down the shops.

Pat stood, his mind still tingling with the surge of four thousand voices lifted to a roar of song. He became conscious suddenly of the three great presses. He seemed still to hear the song in their vast, ceaseless rhythm—"we play—the game—and play—it square" . . .

Suddenly his face flooded with light.

"Chanting wheels!" he cried under his breath.

He turned slowly into his little office, and stared for a long time unseeingly at a production sheet.

THE END

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